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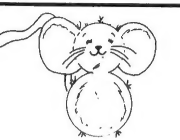

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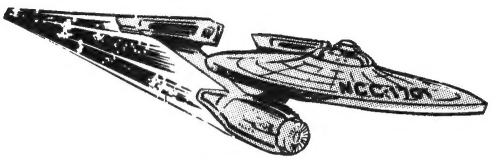

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ENTERPRISE INCIDENTS is where the Star Trek fan can journey to have his wildest dreams fulfilled. *EI* is now in its fifth year of publication and has now hit a regular quarterly schedule. Being so close to Los Angeles, it is the only major ST zine with access to the personalities and artists responsible for the continuing ST saga as evidenced by our early reports on the film and our recent interviews with Dorothy Fontana and Greg Jein. Future issues will include a spectacular feature on the designs and props done for *ST:TMP* by *Brick Price 'Miniatures* (who built the ships for *Project: UFO* and other shows) as well as an article by Dorothy Fontana on her Star Trek animated episode, "Yesteryear" with special artwork accompanying it done especially for *EI* by Ron Wilber.

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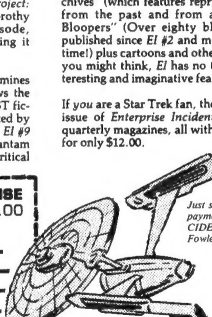

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ALL IN COLOR FOR A DIME

This issue of *The Golden Age of Comics* should have a little to please everyone. Those who prefer humor will head immediately for the works of Walt Kelly, Al Capp and Basil Wolverton. While those who want action in their comics will be satiated by both the Simon and Kirby and Paul Gustavson's Twister stories. Those who enjoy science fiction will also find their money's worth in the Meteor Martin, Spacehawk, Solar Legion and Blue Bolt tales. We feel that the mixture, while certainly somewhat eclectic, is well balanced to present everyone with something that they can like best about the issue. And more importantly, we also hope that most people find several things that they like, enjoying the mixture itself.

We have also tried to balance the relationship of text to story and to make the text features themselves more visual. The trivia quiz has returned from last issue and we have begun a series on The Obscure Heroes of the Golden Age, inspired by the similar series which appeared many years ago in the *RBCC*, our sister publication. We will continue to work different balances between the story content and the number of articles based on what is on hand and what seems most interesting and awaiting your response as the to the assortment that you would most prefer. This being only the third issue of a monthly magazine that has actually maintained its schedule, we do not have very many letters in as of yet. We certainly hope that they will be forthcoming so that we can begin our letters section with the next issue. Please take this as a very strong hint to write and let us know what you want to see, how you feel about what we have run, which characters you personally care for the most, and which creators you would like to read about.

Simon and Kirby are probably the most influential team of creators ever to work within the medium and as such the feature article on them which appears this issue is both fascinating and a must. The stories accompanying the article are not the ones for which the team are best known but are hopefully more likely not to have already been read by most of our readers. Certainly their Captain America or Sandman or Fighting American work would be too common having already been extensively reprinted.

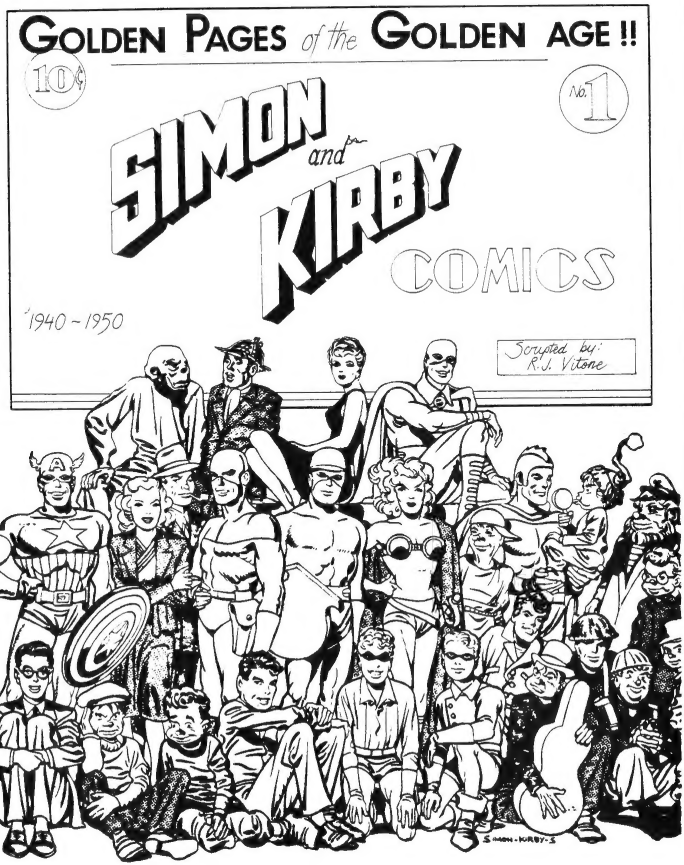
The section on Basil Wolverton is well-warranted since this man's creative genius has produced many strips which are among the personal favorites of most of us who care about the Golden Age at all. *The Smithsonian Collection* certainly recognized this and selected some of his best material for reprinting. Here you are able to see both his most famous adventure strip, Spacehawk, and the strip which preceded it and in many ways set the tone of what was to come. In future issues we will present some of the more unusual humorous work of this man.

Walt Kelly, who made a major appearance in our first issue with both Nibble and Nubble and Peter Wheat, again appears this time represented by Seaman Sy Wheeler. Al Capp also makes a brief one page cameo in the form of a reprint of one of his public service ads created for the government. Doesn't that give the flavor of the period!

Paul Gustavson's Twister rounds out the story material with a character which was one of the more interesting but least known of the 1940s heroes. The basis of the character, that of creating small storms which he uses against his opponents, has reappeared many times since.

Finally, Bill Cole, perhaps the leading expert in the field, presents a very informative piece on the preservation of comic books as part of our irregularly appearing Preserving Panels series. While the article is somewhat technical and requires a certain amount of wading through it is certainly worth the effort.

Future issues? Well some of that has begun to come together. C.C. Beck and Jack Kirby will be appearing in interviews. Jerry Bails will be presenting a new and lengthy look at the justice Society of America complete with updated index. Jim Korkis will be looking at the career of Bill Everett. And Roy Thomas will be here as well. And every day we are working to unearth still more gems from the treasure trove.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No. 1
SIMON and KIRBY
COMICS
1940 - 1950
Scripted by R.J. Vitone
SIMON-KIRBY-S

You can't hold them back. Looming up, literally punching their way out of the mist of the past, come images of unbridled intensity. Looking even better now than you remember -- even better because time has enhanced, not eroded their impact. Vivid images of power, speed, glory...

Captain America rifles a "sleeper" punch at a reeling Black Talon; Blue Bolt blasts a ravenous tree; Sandman leads an army of cops against Thor and an Asgardian horde; Rip Carter and the Boy Commandos invade France; Manhunter harpoons a Nazi sub.

These images were created nearly four decades ago. Created by two men born near the end of one global war while America stood on the brink of another. The images are the product of youthful exuberance and dynamic imagination. They are, as well as thousands more, the creations of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby.

Action Comics #1 (June, 1938) with its introduction of Superman, started a chain reation that still hasn't stopped. Dozens of publishers entered the "Super-hero" comic book market, each frantically scrambling for a piece of the gold mine that DC/National had opened. Companies named Fox, Centaur, Fiction House, Timely, Curtis, MLJ, Fawcett, and others all presented their own "original" costumed wonders. The field was wide open, just waiting for the right men to come along. They did!

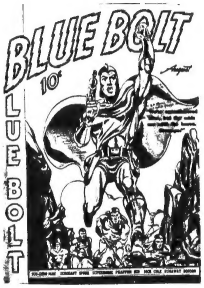
At National, Bob Kane hit with The Batman; Gardner Fox

came up with The Flash; Bill Finger wrote The Green Lantern. The first Timely book, *Marvel Comics #1* (October, 1939) introduced Carl Burgos' creation, The Human Torch, as well as The Sub-Mariner by Bill Everett. C.C. Beck developed Captain Marvel for *Whiz Comics* at Fawcett. Will Eisner created and produced The Spirit for weekly newspaper syndication while running a studio that packaged whole comics for whatever publisher was buying. Many were.

Joe Simon knocked around the comics field almost from the beginning. An enterprising hustler, he freelanced for many of the feature-hungry companies -- editing, writing, pencilling, inking. His finished product backed up many main attractions in many different titles. One of his characters, Blue Bolt (Novelty, June, 1940), hit the stands as the star of his own book. Simon was rolling, but something was missing. Of his art, it could be said, "The spirit was willing, but the talent was weak." He could draw, and his story-telling technique was always competent, but he lacked ...finesse.

Finesse, named Jack Kirby, walked in one day in 1940.

Jack Kirby took a round-about route into comics history. After a brief stint in cartoon animation, he moved over to a small newspaper syndicate, producing filler spots and continuity strips. Under a handful of pseudonyms (Jack Curtiss, Ted Grey, Bob Brown, Curt Davis, among others) he brought life to a series of daily and Sunday pages that ranged from out and out slapstick (Abdul Jones, Socko the Seadog) to pure romantic adventure (Lone Rider, The Black Buccaneer). His first science-fiction work, clearly inspired by Raymond's Flash Gordon, was The Solar Legion in 1938 (Later reprinted in Crash Comics), and "Cyclone" Burke. Eager to enter the growing comic book market, Kirby contributed to an Eisner studio package. *Jumbo Comics* (Fiction House, 1938) ran three strikingly different Kirby strips; The Diary of Dr. Haywood, Wilton of the West, and an adaptation of The Count of Monte Cristo. Next, he did his first "super-hero" work, daily newspaper strips of The Blue Beetle for the Fox Features Syndicate. The restrictions of the panel-by-panel newspaper form at last seemed too confining. After years of refinement, the fluid linework and distinctive power were set. The ideas, the images, were ready to burst out and clamor for attention. All Jack Kirby lacked was direction.



Direction met Finesse and another layer in the foundation of comics history was ready to be formed.

As originated by Simon, Blue Bolt was standard fare of the day. Billed as "The Human Lightning Streak", he wore a flashy blue and red outfit and projected his power through his lightning gun. Fred Parrish, "Harvard Football Star", almost dies while gaining "the powers of lightning." That first story also introduced two other main characters; Dr. Bertoff, who would become Blue Bolt's friend and mentor, and The Green Sorceress, Bertoff's timeless evil enemy. Kirby took over the art chores on Blue Bolt with issue #2. Working from Simon's script, Kirby changed the direction of the story and expanded the scope of the adventure. The earthbound saga took on futuristic cosmic aspects as ultimate evil (The Sorceress) sought to defeat ultimate good

(Dr. Bertoff) and to enslave Blue Bolt in the process. An odd Love/Hate relationship added spice to the series. Blue Bolt and the Green Sorceress, a perfect match despite their clashing color schemes, were separated by her overwhelming ambition tor rule the universe. Invariably, her plans smashed, she would skulk off, frustrated in more ways than one. Finally free to express himself, Kirby used the opportunity to open up the page with his art. Whole armies marched into battle, no half-measures -- Rocket ships blasted mountain fortresses to atoms as men and animals locked in desperate battle to save (or conquer) the world, and science grappled with magic in an accelerating swirl of action. In the center of it all stood Blue Bolt, the first Simon and Kirby hero, a proto-type of what was to follow -- inspiring, square-jawed and resolute, he cut a dashing path through the proceedings. (In some matters he was hopeless. In one story Dr. Bertoff managed to reform the Sorceress. Smiling boyishly, Blue Bolt touches her arm and tells her that they can be "good friends now".) Whether or not the poor Sorceress ever got anything more than "friendship" from Blue Bolt was left to others to illustrate. Before the ink had dried on their final effort for the title (Issue -10, March 1941), the team had already had new material in print from other companies. Simon & Kirby, like the comics business itself, ached

by JOE SIMON and JACK KIRBY
WOW...DON'T RUSH TO YOUR NEAREST TEXT BOOK AND POINT TO THE MANY FACTS PROVING THAT THE WORLD IS ROUND! WE AGREE WHOLE-HEARTEDLY THAT IT IS...
HOWEVER...
THE ANCIENT CHARTS THAT COMMODORE SINDBAD AND HIS BOY EXPLORERS USE IN THEIR QUEST FOR THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA...WERE DRAWN UP BY SEAMEN LONG DEAD... WHO SAILED ACROSS THESE WATERS RARELY SEEN BY MODERN MAN...IF THERE IS MORE THAN LEGEND TO THIS STORY, WE SAY..."LET'S FIND IT!" JUST WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE DID REACH
The EDGE of the WORLD!

to grow and expand. Blue Bolt provided a training ground for the maneuvers that laid just ahead.

Their next stop, however, was neither long nor remarkable. Fawcett Comics, publishers of *Whiz* and owners of the richly successful Captain Marvel,called them in. They were commissioned to produce the first issue of *Captain Marvel Adventures*, and to introduce a new character, Mr. Scarlet, in the first issue of *Wow Comics*. these efforts, which appeared early in 1941, were hardly prime examples of S & K's work. Whether hampered by Fawcett's dull house style, or pressed by deadline pressures, the final product was lack-luster. Although the stint at Fawcett didn't earn them any awards, it did add to their growing reputation.

Another publisher expressed interest. Timely Comics, whom Joe Simon had sold work to in the past, needed fresh material. Other than the Human Torch and the Sub-Mariner, there were no readily identifiable heroes in the stable. Aside from *Marvel Mystery Comics*, Timely had no other big seller to boast of. The set-up was perfect! Sometime in late 1940, Joe Simon and Jack Kirby moved into the Timely Bullpen, ready and eager to contribute.

The first result of their efforts has become sort of a legend in the annals of comicdom — *Red Raven Comics #1* (August, 1940). Probably packaged before they settled in at Timely, it contains three strips done seperately by the two. The Red Raven, completely by Simon, reverts to his pre-Kirby style. With static art and inept dialogue, this tale of a red-haired guy gifted with a pair of bat-like wings is totally uninteresting. Jack Kirby's contributions to the issue are two back-up features: Comet Pierce, a Solar Legion-style space opera, and Mercury. Of the pair, Mercury is deserving of comment. A tight eight-page epic, the story combines elements that Simon & Kirby would draw on many times. Mercury, son of Jupiter, is sent to Earth to stop rebel god Pluto's evil plans. The premise is a good one — Pluto, in the Hitler-like guise of "Hendler", leads a Nazi-style country into war. All in fun, as he explains to the angry Mercury. Pluto's plans are blocked at every turn by Mercury, setting up an interesting basis for a series. It didn't come about, although a very similar concept was used in S & K's Hurricane series a short time later. The quality of both men's work in this issue leads me to believe that the material was prepared earlier and meant as free-lance. Seemingly, the team brought it over to Timely with them. A common misconception today is that Kirby worked on

the Red Raven story. This is untrue. Aside from teaming with Simon to do a slick cover for the book, Kirby drew no part of the main feature.

Whatever the case, they shifted to top gear in short order. New features rolled off their drawing boards at a rapid clip.

Marvel Boy made his first (and last) bow in *Daring Mystery #6* (Sept. 1940). Cover featured and drawn in S & K's best style, this was another variation on the "gods" theme. This time, Hercules comes from Valhalla to save America. If you can understand why a Greek god living in the Norse god's home would want to save America, then you're *way* ahead of me! The spirit of Hercules is invested in young Martin Burns, so that the young man can oppose "fifth-columnists," Hitler's Nazi spies sent to undermine the American way. Or, as Hercules so colorfully puts it, "America needs a champion...a saviour to clean out the human vermin who plot to overthrow liberty!" Marvel Boy, wearing his nifty new blue and red outfit (what else?) leaps right out and captures a nest of spies and the sub they came in on! Wow! No wonder the character didn't appear again.

The Fiery Mask backed up Marvel Boy in that same issue. Created by Simon for Timely some time earlier, this was Kirby's first spin on the hero. Fiery Mask combined the superhero and horror genres, producing a yellow/red/green costumed man who faced some fairly grim foes. In this story, Mask confronts a devil-like creature who covers it's grisly knife-killings with the Exorcist-like disguise of a baby. Kirby inked over Simon's pencils, resulting in a hurried-looking and uneven story.

They didn't let up though. They produced a series of black-and-white SF illos for *Marvel Stories Pulp*; contributed another Fiery Mask to the first issue of *Human Torch* (Fall, 1940, Which is really number 2, because Timely canned Red Raven and turned the numbering sequence over to the Torch series.); then punched out an Angel cover for Marvel Mystery. All that, and they still found the time to devise the Vision.

The Vision made his debut in *Marvel Mystery #13* (Nov. 1940). Tall, stern, and usually very grim, he was similar to DC's Spectre. S & K again combined scientific trappings with the supernatural to provide story settings. Like the Spectre, the Vision saw himself as a grim avenger, dealing death to evil-doers. Even more of the team's still-growing style showed up in this series — Kirby's love of intricate machinery, use of dramatic close-ups and exaggerated panel angles, and great care in plot development. Although his powers would change over a period of time, one element remained a necessity for the Vision — smoke. It was needed to form a bridge from his dimension to ours. The sight of a messenger of doom appearing from a haze of

smoke was another dramatic image that stuck in the minds of readers. Simon and Kirby's stay on the series was short (*Marvel Mystery #28* was the last with any S & K influence), but they managed to put the Vision through some interesting paces against some rather odd foes -- everything from werewolves to Nazis to plain, everyday racketeers. *Marvel Mystery #27* presented my own favorite story. Hell is shown as a big-time business, complete with offices manned by demonic typists. The Devil, (called "L.S." by his hirelings) calls in his sales manager to read him out over the shocking discovery of an evil-free town. An agent is dispatched to clear up this awful situation, and it's up to the Vision to stop the out-break of terror. Like their "gods" stories, S & K would use the "Satan and Hell" source as springboards for a handful of stories. By the time this one appeared, they had already moved on to a new project. Under other creative hands, the Vision would continue as a popular series for a few years. The need to move onward arose, and the team had worked up another hero that they presented to their boos, Martin Goodman. Fortunately, he liked it and gave it the go-ahead.

Captain America was about to be born.

A full forty years after he first appeared, the sheer wonder of Captain America is still felt. Others were more powerful. But Superman was, after all, an alien

posing as an earthling. Captain Marvel came from a long line of mythological heroes. The Spectre was dead! Captain America was vibrantly alive, excitingly real, totally American! Still, it's difficult to even imagine the era that gave birth to *Captain America Comics #1* (March, 1940). Ice wagons clattered through alleys, Bing Crosby ruled the radio, and The Great Depression still held a grip on much of the country. Casting a bleak cloud over everything was the European war. Hitler had taken France and stood on the shore of the English Channel, waving his fist and shouting promises of doom at the Island Fortress of England. The United States were violently torn by the conflict. First-generation Americans, thier parents born in Europe, supported thier mother countries. Peace-groups lobbied (sometimes viciously) to prevent young Americans from shedding blood in another foreign war. Pseudo-Nazi organizations, protected by the Constitution, stirred up these factions, arguing that Hitler's policies would "save" Europe. Hawk groups demanded aid to England to stop the Nazi Juggernaut. All the while, Nazi spies, the "fifth column", created an atmosphere of fear among citizens, with methods as simple as rumor-spreading and as deadly as deliberate sabotage. Comic book creators, mostly a young and idealistic lot, had drawn on the war for subject matter for years. Heroes smashed thinly-disguised "European Dictatorships" and "Asiatic fiends" with gleeful abandon. But none grasped the urgent situation or so clearly faced the terrifying reality of what was coming as did Joe Simon and Jack Kirby. Long before Pearl Harbor did it, Captain America did his part to pull a fragmented nation into a cohesive, cooperating unit. By embodying every American

Dream, Captain America symbolized the hopes, the ambitions, and the basic beliefs of all free men. Simon and Kirby understood this, and poured more of themselves into the Captain Amaerica stories and art than they had ever done before. Power shot off the page, trapping the reader, firing his imagination. Captain America and Bucky were thrust into an amazing, almost nightmarish world. Kirby's art, with the assist of a small stable of Timely staff members, actually glowed. Sharp black lines accented every muscle, every punch, every movement. And there was plenty of movement! Warner Brothers made cartoons the same way: fast, colorful, violent.

The origin is legend: Steve Rogers, typical Yankee, goes into a Kirby lab and comes out virtually waring the Flag. Red, white and blue chain mail, a couple of stars thrown on for good measure. Again borrowing from myths, Cap becomes a "god-figure", even sporting Mercury's wings on his cowl. Add a shield (Cap was one of the few heroes to carry one) and a sidekick (Bucky) and bring on the Jap-a-Nazis!

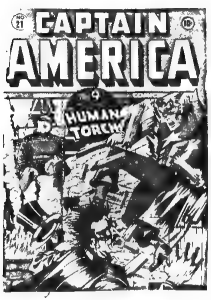
Incidently, Bucky functioned as more than just someone to talk to. Besides developing into an A-1 character, he showed young readers that although the U.S. is free, sometimes you have to fight to keep it that way.

With stars who were actual icons, S & K went all out for hordes of scenery-chewing, fascinatingly grotesque villains. Plain old everyday foes were out

of the question. Opening an early issue of Cap almost required a clean bill of mental health. Frail emotional states could have been damaged by some of the monstrosities that spilled off of the pages. S & K knew. They drew on every source they could — movies, pulps, even other comics —

looking for the right combination of hammering horror and eerie suspense. It worked. Cap and Bucky met up with zombies, cannibals, and oriental giants. They melted the plans of the Wax-Man (who kept his victim's heads in a trophy case). They faced a black legion — The Black Toad, The Black Talon, The Black Witch. For good measure they starched the White Death. They tied up the Hangman and killed The Man Who Wouldn't Die. They even ventured into Sherlock Holmes territory once, when they faced The Phantom Hound of Cardiff Moor. These menaces had two things in common — most of them, seemingly supernatural or not, were really German or Jap plots, and none of them were *half* as menacing as the *Red Skull*!

Logic demands that if Captain America symbolized decency and fought for freedom, then you needed an opponent who embodied evil and lived for tyranny. Enter the Red Skull, who first appeared in *Captain America #1*, and turned up constantly, over and over again.



Always blasted to certain death, always falling to horrible doom, he would rise, Phoenix-like, to murder again. He re-defined evil. Although he wore a swastika on his chest (and sometimes a rising sun), he gave you the feeling he was waiting for something worse to come along. His attacks on the U.S. and Cap are classics of unrestrained malice. Using terror-tactics and exploiting his frightning visage to the utmost, the Skull was actually appealing in his style. Among Golden Age villains, only Captain Nazi (Fawcett) and The Claw (Gleason) came close to being the Red Skull's equal in spellbinding evil.

A prime example of the Skull at his best is the lead story in *Captain America #3* (May, 1940). Aptly titled "The Return of the Red Skull", it opens with the villain coming back to life from a drug-induced death. Determined to avenge himself on America, he begins by stealing military secret weapon plans and killing the man who guards them. Just how he kills the guardian is fiendishly clever. Laughing, the Skull asks the Major to hit him. A blow is struck, and the officer crumples, dead. "The touch of Death," the killer laughs, "Those who touch me...die!" In no time at all, a giant engine of destruction is built, using the stolen plans. Unleashing the full fury of the machine, the Red Skull strikes. Nothing stands in the way of the runaway power drill, as buildings are crushed and thousands are killed. The Skull was obviously no baseball fan. The drill smashes its way into Ebbet's Field during a crowded game. Distainfully he tells his driver, "We've got them trapped! Crush every human being in this stadium!" Cap, Bucky, and an army of police drive the Skull off. Simon and Kirby toss in a curve, switching the scene to a circus sideshow where two cheap hoods decide to dress up like Cap and Bucky and make some quick money. Of course, The Red Skull and his gang show up and capture the phonies. Protesting does them no good. They die, hanging at the end of a rope as the Skull laughs uproariously. But his laughter dies in his throat as the real Captain America and Bucky appear. Startled, but still deadly, the Red Skull stands his ground and tells Bucky to hit him. Bucky lets loose a blast that rocks the killer off his feet...and the touch of death fails! Bucky tells the stunned Skull that Cap had determined that the death had been caused by electrical wiring in the villain's clothes. Insulated gloves solved that problem. Unimpressed, the wily Nazi busts a chair over the kid's head and dashes for the power drill, tossing a bomb as he does. Cap catches it and flings it back — right into the machine. A gigantic blast, and Captain America and Bucky rise up out of the debris.

"Where's the Skull?" gasps Bucky.

"Probably dead," replies Cap.

Well, he couldn't be right all the time!

Needless to say, Captain America was a huge hit. Timely was quick to exploit him, producing more comics for him to star in. A fan club, The Sentinels of Liberty, swelled to over 100,000 members. *Captain America Comics* began to outsell Timely's flagship, *Marvel Mystery*. Simon and Kirby, understandably wanted a piece of the action, in the form of more money. Their request was turned down. After doing ten full issues and contributing two Cap stories to *All Winners Comics* (Spring, Fall, 1941) the team packed up and moved out of the Timely Bullpen. They left behind their greatest achievement, but certainly not their last.

Where do you go after you've reached the top? Over to the best, that's where.

National/DC was the richest comics company of the Golden Age, publishing such top books as *Action*, *All-Star*, *Adventure*, *Detective*, *World's Finest*, and *Sensation*. Stars in the fold included Superman, Hawkman, Starman, Batman, The Flash, Wonder Woman, The Spectre, Green Lantern, Dr. Fate, and many more. With Superman's success they had built a strong line of best-selling titles into what was clearly regarded as the leader in the field. This, then, is where Simon and Kirby came to ply their trade early in 1942.

Speed was the key. Not wanting to lose momentum from their jump, the team pushed out an astounding number of pages, cranking out six to ten finished pages a *day* at a time when other artists were sweating to produce that many in a week. The resulting stories took on a frenzied look, a manic feel, that stood out sharply from the rest of DC's house products. (At Timely, blood, gore, and violence were par for the course. At DC, a quieter approach was the norm.)

The Sandman had begun his crime-busting life in *Adventure*

Comics #40 (July, 1939). At first he wore a Shadow-style outfit — slouch hat, cape, gloves, and a gas mask to conceal his identity. By the time S & K took over, (*Adventure #72*, March, 1942) the character had already been up-dated, given a more current super-heroish yellow and blue leotard as well as a Bucky-type boy buddy, Sandy. One of the best carry-overs from the earlier days was a dreams motif — Sandman striking terror into crook's hearts via their dreams. S & K used the device to dramatic effect many times, with Sandman rising (Vision-like) out of a nightmare mist, tormenting guilty men. They added their own distinct brand of action to the strip, and never looked back. Like most of the team's DC output, stories ran eight to ten pages each, all packed with bursting energy. Everything flowed with smooth strokes as Sandman and Sandy raced through a murky world of melodramatic menace. Although the strip shared *Adventure's* pages with a handful of star players (Starman, Hourman, Shining Knight), it was S & K's Sandman who dominated the book's cover for years to come, even after the team moved on.

As if one dose of Simon and Kirby weren't enough, *Adventure #73* (April, 1942) premiered and cover-featured their second DC product — Manhunter. Presented as a big-game hunter bored by lack of challenges, the murder of his detective-friend sparks Rick Nelson to hunt the "world's most cunning and dangerous game — Man!" After

a dark and brooding opening tale featuring a beautiful S & K villain, the Buzzard, the series trailed off to a predictable run of semi-success. The team's heart was in another direction.

While still at Timely, S & K had laid out the opening issues of two new comics before departing: The Young Allies, starring Bucky, Toro, and a handful of Sentinels of Liberty, plus Tough Kids Squad. Both sprang from Jack Kirby's tenement childhood, with settings and gangs right out of Bowery Boys movie. It was only natural, then, to expand on the theme for DC.

Star Spangled Comics #7 (April, 1942) introduced The Newsboy Legion and The Guardian for the

first time. The Newsboys were Tommy, Gabby, Scrapper, and Big Words, all children of the slums, just one step away from reform school. Enter Jim Harper, rookie cop, who wins them over to semi-righteousness through trust and understanding. Forced by thugs into assuming the vigilante role of the Guardian (in blue and yellow costume replete with police-badge shaped shield) Harper works hard to cover up his double life from the street-wise kids. The series revealed an affectionate warmth that S & K had rarely shown before — stories became touching morality plays in which simple virture wins out over evil. A notable change in rhythm, the series enjoyed a lucrative run.

The Boy Commandos were different. They were even *more* popular.

World War II provided the setting for this exercise in excitement. The formula was just right to appeal to young readers — a group of boys, each representing a free country at war, join up with the hardest-hitting outfit in any army...the Commandos! Led by staunch Rip Carter, the

group (Brooklyn, Alfie, Jan, Andre) go face-to-face with Hitler and Tojo's troops on their home grounds. No locale was too exotic or distant for S & K to send their Axis-crushers off to. They fought the desert corps in Libya and defeated Imperial Marines in the Pacific. They "invaded" Europe a full year before Ike did! (*Boy Commandos #4*, Fall, 1943, showed the Allies bursting out of landing craft on-

to a French beach. A bold banner proclaimed, "Special Invasion Issue!") None of their stories sounded the call to action as clearly as "The Invasion of America" (*Detective #76*, June, 1943). Simon and Kirby banded all of their DC characters together for the first and only time to repel a Nazi army in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty. Guess who wins.

The Boy Commandos stood up to their greatest challenge in *Boy Commandos #5* (Winter, 1943). "Satan To See You" combines every element that Simon and Kirby would be remembered for — arresting story, flashy action,

solid art, and gentle humor — all woven into one taut package. Opening in 1933, a broken, disgraced German, Her Drueg, signs a pact with "Mr. Bleak", who promises ten years of good luck, fame, fortune, and power. The price? Krueg's soul. With nothing to lose, Krueg laughingly signs. (He fails to notice that "Mr. Bleak" casts a very disturbing shadow.) Ten years later, now a respected General in Hitler's army, Krueg is no longer laughing. Everything has come too easy, and it's almost time to pay the price! Desperate, he surrenders his for-

AND BEFORE THE DUST HAS SETTLED THE COMMANDOS SWEEP TO VICTORY!
HE'S GONE THATAWAY! THE NAZIS WON'T FORGIVE THIS! WOULD SOMEONE TELL ME WHAT THE RIGHT AGE IS FOR A SPY?

ces to Rip Carter and the Boy Commandos and begs for protection, telling them of his fears. Doubting but concerned for their prisoner, they agree to take him to England and see him through his imagined date with destiny. Midnight looms and the chilled Boy Commandos guard their paranoid guest. Everything goes fine until fate takes a hand ...A tipsy English Lord, on his way home from a costume party, (You guessed it, he's in a Devil outfit) has his top hat blown away by a gust of wind. He gives chase, running right into the shaky kids. Overcoming their fears, the lads pile on the devilish figure. The ensuing melee draws Rip away from Krueg. As Rip dashes for the fight, he passes the round "Mr. Bleak" who says, "Pardon me, my good man...I have an appointment with..." Rushing by, Rip tells him, "Sorry! No time now! See me later!" While he untangles the boys and their hapless victim, a scream splits the air...Krueg is dead. At Midnight. And in his lifeless hand... "Mr. Bleak's receipt for one soul.

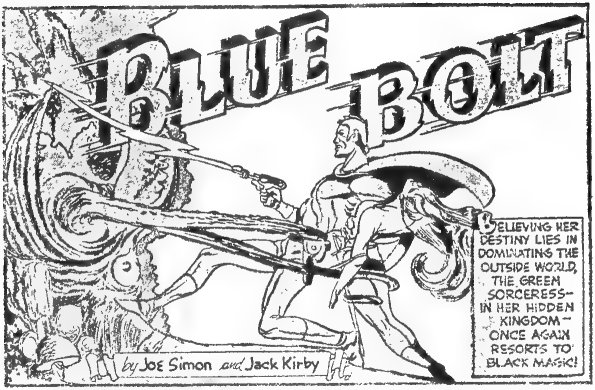
The Boy Commandos hit it big with the readers. Besides appearing in *Detective Comics* and in *World's Finest Comics*, their own title ran well into the late '40s. Simon and Kirby, of course, contributed mainly to the earlier stories. World War II, which both men had faced for years in print, now called for their direct involvement.

Drafted, both Simon and Kirby served in the armed forces, but neither turned his back on comics. Throughout the rest of the war ('44, '45),both *Adventure Comics* and *Boy Commandos* *Comics* sported covers laid out and credited to the team. One has the image of Jack Kirby crouched in a muddy foxhole scratching out a Sandman and Sandy cover.

When the conflict ended in early 1945, both men returned. Like most vets, they came home to an America that had changed in their absence. Society had matured. Tastes had altered. The comics business in general floundered, blindly striking out in new directions, seeking to recapture the old magic. For Simon and Kirby, a long period of experimentation lay ahead. Romance, Crime, Westerns, and Horror were the new genres, all opening up for the first time on the comics pages. Innovative as ever, the two men moved into all of these folds, producing triumphs in all of them, and still free-lancing in the old standby super-hero market.

Stuntman. Young Romance. Boy Explorers. Justice Traps the Guilty. And so it goes.

The war was over, but the Golden Age went on.

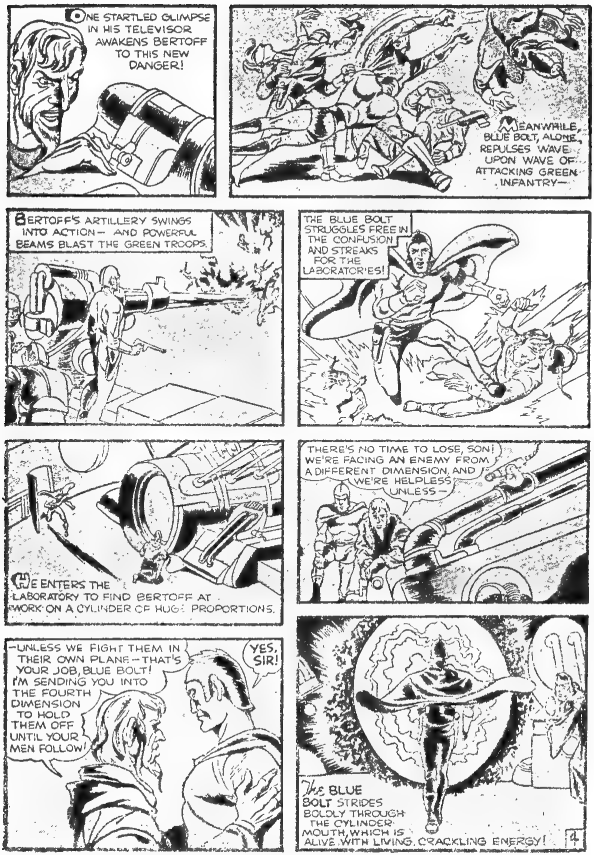

BLUE BOLT
by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby
BELIEVING HER DESTINY LIES IN DOMINATING THE OUTSIDE WORLD, THE GREEN SORCERESS—IN HER HIDDEN KINGDOM—ONCE AGAIN RESORTS TO BLACK MAGIC!

I'VE TRAVELLED FAR, GREAT ONE! I'VE TROD FORBIDDEN ROADS BEYOND TIME AND SPACE! I HAVE LOOTED VAULTS WHOSE GUARDIANS AND THEIR GREAT CITIES HAD BECOME DUST LONG BEFORE THE FIRST APE STOOD ERECT TO FIGHT.

BLUE BOLT, Vol. 1, No. 5, October 1940, published monthly by Novelty Press, Inc., P.O. Box 1198, Philadelphia, Pa., editorial offices, 292 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. Printed in U.S.A. Copyright, 1940, by Funnies, Incorporated, New York, N.Y. U.S.A. Price 10 cents per copy. Subscription price $2.00 per year. Application for entry as Second-Class Matter at Philadelphia, Pa. is pending. No actual person is named or delineated in this magazine.

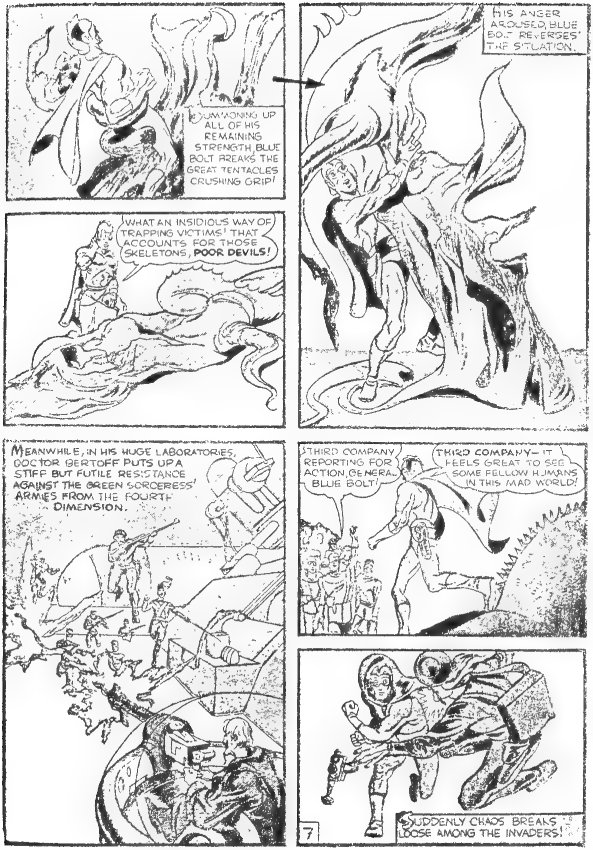
YOU'VE DONE WELL! NOW BEGONE— YOUR DARK PRESENCE DISGUSTS ME!
I AM SERVANT TO YOUR GREAT POWERS, AND SHALL RETURN FROM THE PITS WHEN NEXT YOU SUMMON ME— FAREWELL!
THAT NIGHT THE BEAUTIFUL SORCERESS PORES THROUGH THE PAGES OF THE TIME-WORN VOLUME.
I'VE FOUND IT! I'VE FOUND IT! THE SECRET OF THE GATEWAY TO THE WORLD BEYOND THE FLAME!
MAJOR KADRONIN, I WANT THE IMMEDIATE SERVICES OF YOUR BEST DRAFTSMEN. I WANT YOU TO DESIGN A MACHINE FOR ME—A WONDERFUL MACHINE!
WEEKS LATER...
THERE IT IS, YOUR MAJESTY! IT WAS EASY TO BUILD FROM YOUR PLANS—BUT ITS PRINCIPLE ESCAPES ME!
IT IS THE GATEWAY TO THE FOURTH DIMENSION, KADRONIN— AND THROUGH IT MY ARMIES WILL MARCH TO GLORY AND CONQUEST
THE GREEN ARMY IS QUICKLY MOBILIZED MEN AND GUNS DISAPPEAR IN THE FLAMING WALL!
FLANKED BY HER GENERALS AND PERSONAL GUARD, THE GREEN SORCERESS IS THE LAST TO ENTER

BAR TO THE EAST, BARRING THE SORCERESS' ACCESS TO THE WORLD'S RADIUM SUPPLY, WITH WHICH SHE CAN CONQUER THE EARTH, IS A LONG LINE OF STEEL FORTIFICATIONS WHICH HOUSE THE HUGE LABORATORIES OF THE SCIENTIST BERTOFF!
BLUE BOLT — I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU.
I'LL BE OVER, SIR— AS SOON AS I'VE FINISHED INSPECTING OUR NEW DEFENSES!
BLUE BOLT IS HORRIFIED AT THE SIGHT THAT GREETS HIM ON HIS TOUR OF INSPECTION.
THEY'RE DEAD! THEY'RE ALL DEAD! HOW ON EARTH COULD IT HAVE HAPPENED?
SUDDENLY BLUE BOLT WHIRLS AND SEES—
JUMPING JUPITER! THE GREEN SORCERESS
A SECOND LATER, BLUE BOLT IS SHOCKED AS THE SORCERESS AND HER GREEN ARMY DISAPPEAR SLOWLY INTO THE GROUND.
MY MEN ARE POURING THROUGH YOUR WALLS BY THE THOUSANDS, BLUE BOLT— I CALL ON YOU TO SURRENDER AT ONCE!
3


ONE STARTLED GLIMPSE IN HIS TELEVISOR AWAKENS BERTOFF TO THIS NEW DANGER!
MEANWHILE, BLUE BOLT, ALONE, REPULSES WAVE UPON WAVE OF ATTACKING GREEN INFANTRY—
BERTOFF'S ARTILLERY SWINGS INTO ACTION— AND POWERFUL BEAMS BLAST THE GREEN TROOPS.
THE BLUE BOLT STRUGGLES FREE IN THE CONFUSION AND STREAKS FOR THE LABORATORIES!
HE ENTERS THE LABORATORY TO FIND BERTOFF AT WORK ON A CYLINDER OF HUGE PROPORTIONS.
THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE, SON! WE'RE FACING AN ENEMY FROM A DIFFERENT DIMENSION, AND WE'RE HELPLESS UNLESS—
—UNLESS WE FIGHT THEM IN THEIR OWN PLANE—THAT'S YOUR JOB, BLUE BOLT! I'M SENDING YOU INTO THE FOURTH DIMENSION TO HOLD THEM OFF UNTIL YOUR MEN FOLLOW!
YES, SIR!
THE BLUE BOLT STRIDES BOLDLY THROUGH THE CYLINDER MOUTH, WHICH IS ALIVE WITH LIVING, CRACKLING ENERGY!
4

THIS CERTAINLY IS AN ODD LOOKING LANDSCAPE!
W-WHY—MY HAND! I-I-CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH IT!
THERE IS A SUDDEN DISTURBANCE IN THE ATMOSPHERE ABOUT HIM. THE BLUE BOLT GAPES IN ASTONISHMENT AS A PAIR OF GOGGLES APPEARS FROM NOWHERE AND BERTOFF'S VOICE RASPS FAINTLY IN HIS EARS!
THOSE GOGGLES WILL HELP YOU RETAIN THREE DIMENSIONAL VISION, YOU SEE, BLUE BOLT, ON YOUR NEW PLANE IT'S POSSIBLE TO SEE ALL SIDES OF ANY OBJECT AT ONCE!
THESE LENSES ARE A GODSEND! EVERYTHING LOOKS SOLID NOW!
HOLY SMOKE! HUMAN SKELETONS! AND THEY LOOK SOLID, TOO. THOSE RAY GUNS AND HELMETS—WHY THESE ARE THE REMAINS OF THE GREEN INFANTRY!
MORE DEAD MEN AND ABANDONED EQUIPMENT! WHAT COULD HAVE CAUSED ALL THIS DESOLATION?
5

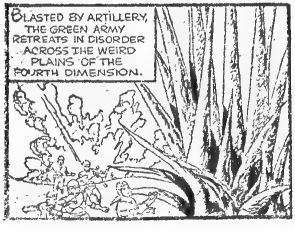
THAT SOUNDED LIKE A WOMAN'S VOICE!
BLUE BOLT— DARLING! LET US FIGHT NO LONGER!
WHAT TH—!
THAT SEEMS STRANGE— COMING FROM YOU!
LET ME PROVE I MEAN IT! COME!
AS THE BLUE BOLT APPROACHES, THE SORCERESS CLASPS HIM IN A FIERCE EMBRACE, HER EYES BLAZE MADLY— TRIUMPHANTLY!
SUDDENLY THERE IS A BLINDING FLASH—THE GREEN SORCERESS VANISHES—AND IN HER PLACE IS THE REVOLTING SHAPE OF THE DREADED "DREAM PLANT," DENIZEN OF THIS NIGHTMARE WORLD WHICH TRAPS ITS PREY BY CONJURING UP VISIONS NEAREST TO ITS VICTIM'S THOUGHTS, AND LURING THEM TO ITS CRUSHING TENTACLES!
-I CAN'T- -CAN'T- -DIE- -LIKE- -THIS- -MUST- -GO- -OUT- -FIGHTING-

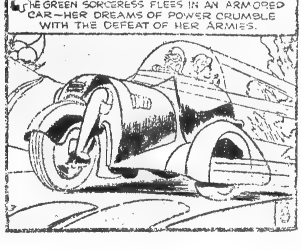

SUMMONING UP ALL OF HIS REMAINING STRENGTH, BLUE BOLT BREAKS THE GREAT TENTACLES CRUSHING GRIP!
HIS ANGER AROUSED, BLUE BOLT REVERSES THE SITUATION.
WHAT AN INSIDIOUS WAY OF TRAPPING VICTIMS! THAT ACCOUNTS FOR THOSE SKELETONS, POOR DEVILS!
MEANWHILE, IN HIS HUGE LABORATORIES, DOCTOR IBERTOFF PUTS UP A STIFF BUT FUTILE RESISTANCE AGAINST THE GREEN SORCERESS' ARMIES FROM THE FOURTH DIMENSION.
THIRD COMPANY REPORTING FOR ACTION, GENERAL BLUE BOLT!
THIRD COMPANY— IT FEELS GREAT TO SEE SOME FELLOW HUMANS IN THIS MAD WORLD!
7
SUDDENLY CHAOS BREAKS LOOSE AMONG THE INVADERS!

BLUE BOLT AND HIS MEN ATTACK THE GREEN ARMY WITH A FEROCITY THAT SENDS THE INVADERS REELING BACK IN BEWILDERMENT AND TERROR! BLUE BOLT, HIMSELF—PLOWS THROUGH THE GREEN RANKS, HIS FISTS DESCENDING LIKE GIANT HAMMERS!

BLUE BOLT'S ARTILLERY COMPLETES THE ROUT!

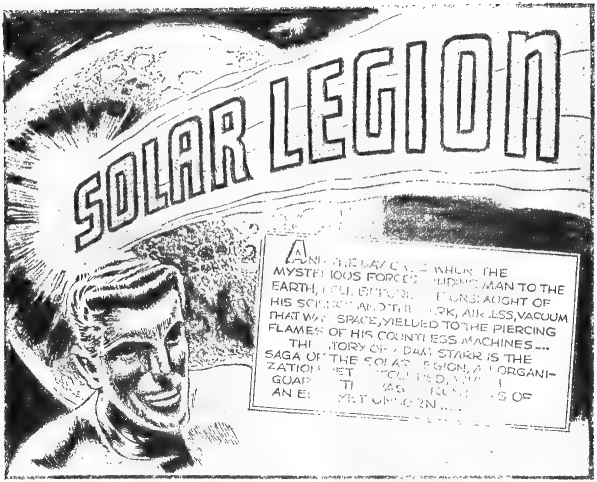
GOOD BOY, BLUE BOLT! COME ON, YOU MEN—THOSE GREEN RASCALS ARE ON THE RUN!


BLASTED BY ARTILLERY, THE GREEN ARMY RETREATS IN DISORDER ACROSS THE WEIRD PLAINS OF THE FOURTH DIMENSION.

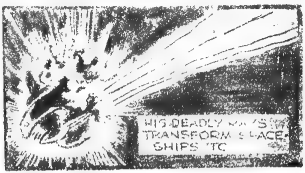

THE GREEN SORCERESS FLEES IN AN ARMORED CAR—HER DREAMS OF POWER CRUMBLE WITH THE DEFEAT OF HER ARMIES.

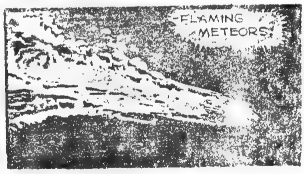
SUDDENLY THE LITTLE CAR IS FLUNG VIOLENTLY INTO THE AIR UNDER THE IMPACT OF A TERRIFIC BLAST!
A ROAD MINE, LAID BY HER OWN RETREATING FORCES TO DELAY PURSUIT, BRINGS DISASTER TO THE GREEN SORCERESS' FLIGHT!
CAPTAIN ZARNO! CAPTAIN ZARNO! OH-H-H- HE'S DEAD!
THE EXPLOSION HAS UNFORTUNATELY ATTRACTED A MOST FORMIDABLE PASSERBY!
HELP!
THERE'S THE VOICE OF THE SORCERESS AGAIN! LEND ME YOUR LANCE, JARED—I'M GOING TO SPEAR ME A DREAM PLANT!
LOOK OUT, NIGHTMARE— HERE I COME!

CHEW ON THIS, YOU SNAKE!
POOR, AMBITIOUS LITTLE FOOL!
THEIR COUNTER CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE GREEN INVADERS A SUCCESS BLUE BOLT AND HIS ARMY LEAVE THE MAD FOURTH DIMENSIONAL WORLD.
UPON THEIR RETURN, BERTOFF EYES THEIR DEFIANT CAPTIVE.
IT SEEMS YOUR SCIENCE HAS AGAIN TRIUMPHED OVER MY MAGIC, DOCTOR BERTOFF!
RIGHT ALWAYS WINS OVER EVIL!
THE GREEN AURA!
THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, MY FRIENDS!
SHE'S GONE!
BACK IN HER GREEN KINGDOM, THE SORCERESS VOWS VENGEANCE!
THOSE TWO SHALL YET FEEL THE POWER OF MY MAGIC!
ANOTHER ADVENTURE OF BLUEBOLT IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE!



TERROR STALKS THE TRAIL OF THE INTERPLANETARY PIONEER IN THE YEAR 2140, A.D. THE RUTHLESS TACTICS OF "BLACK MICHAEL" TAKE A HEAVY TOLL IN SPACE TRAFFIC....

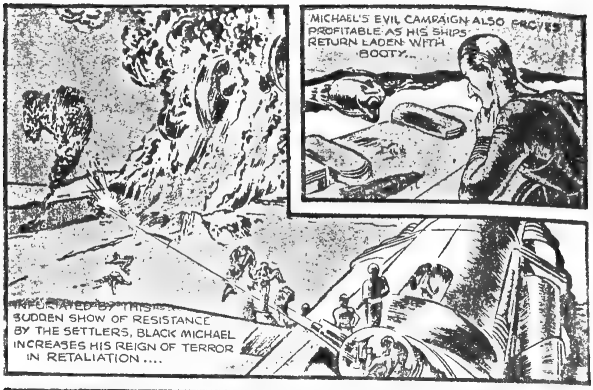




FROM CRASH #1 MAY 1940 ORIGINALLY BY HOLLYOKE

ENTIRE SETTLEMENTS ARE BLASTED INTO OBLIVION!
FOR YEARS TO COME THE ENTIRE SOLAR SYSTEM TREMBLES UNDER THE THREAT OF PIRATE RAY-GUNS...
THE AIRLESS VOID IS STREWN WITH THE FROZEN BODIES OF MEN AND BITS OF WRECKAGE ONCE PART OF HUGE SPACE LEVIATHANS
OUT OF THE CHAOS AND DESPAIR THE AVENGER STRIKES!
HIS TINY DART-SHIP SOON CARRIES THE FIGHT TO THE DEATH DEALERS, THEMSELVES!
ADAM STARR, A MAN WITH A CAUSE! A MAN DETERMIND TO BRING JUSTICE TO A SOLAR SYSTEM RULED BY THE LAWLESS

OPERATING FROM A HIDDEN BASE ON "IO," ONE OF JUPITER'S MANY SATELLITES—
— ADAM STARR CARRIES OUT HIS SURPRISE RAIDS ON PIRATE CRAFT!
STARR'S DEEDS EVEN REACH THE ATTENTION OF LONELY PROSPECTORS ON STRANGE, UNEXPLORED WORLDS
THE DARING EXPLOITS OF THE MYSTERIOUS DART-SHIP ECHOES IN THE CANYONS OF EVERY METROPOLIS IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM!
3
PIRATES COME FOR TRIBUTE BUT FIND DEATH, AS INTERPLANETARY SETTLERS EVERYWHERE, FIRED BY STARR'S SUCCESS, FIGHT BACK WITH RENEWED COURAGE!

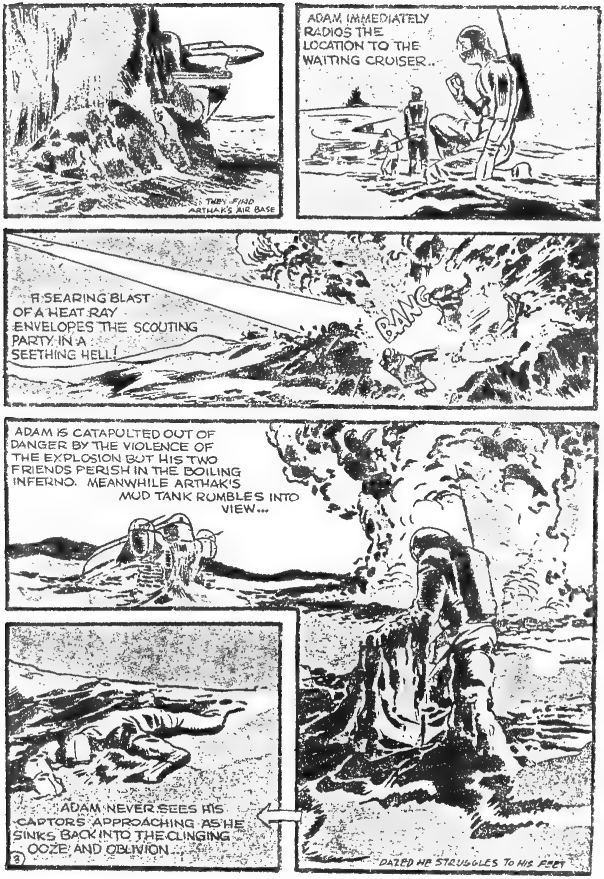

MICHAEL'S EVIL CAMPAIGN ALSO PROVES PROFITABLE AS HIS SHIPS RETURN LADEN WITH BOOTY...
INFURIATED BY THIS SUDDEN SHOW OF RESISTANCE BY THE SETTLERS, BLACK MICHAEL INCREASES HIS REIGN OF TERROR IN RETALIATION....

FOLLOWING AN OUTLAW SPACE VESSEL, ADAM-STARR DISCOVERS BLACK MICHAEL'S BASE ON PLUTO.
I HOPE I CAN CLEAR THE CONCUSSION WHEN I LAY THIS RADIO CONTROLLED EGG IN BLACK MICHAEL'S LAP!
YOU CAN'T STOP ME NOW, BOYS. YOUR GANG IS THROUGH!

SHE'S HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THE CENTER OF THE PIRATE BASE! I HOPE I'VE TIMED MY PULL-OUT RIGHT— BEFORE SHE HITS!
FOR ONE TERRIFYING MOMENT, BLACK MICHAEL AND HIS MEN FREEZE IN HORROR AT THE ONCOMING JUGGERNAUT OF DEATH !!!
THE BLAST THAT FOLLOWS, ROCKS THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF PLUTO!
THE YEARS OF PIRATE TYRANNY ARE ENDING. BLACK MICHAEL'S DEATH MARKS THE FIRST STEP TOWARD EXTERMINATING PIRACY IN THE SYSTEM
FOLLOW ADAM STARR'S FURTHER ADVENTURES IN HIS BATTLE AGAINST SPACE PIRACY WITNESS THE FORMING OF THE SOLAR LEGION IN THE NEXT EXCITING ISSUE!!

SOLAR LEGION
SWORN TO RID THE SOLAR SYSTEM OF THE EVER PRESENT THREAT OF SPACE PIRACY, ADAM STARR PROCEEDS WITH HIS IDEA TO ORGANIZE A SPACE POLICE SYSTEM.
SORRY TO CUT IN ON YOUR PRIVATE WAVE ADMIRAL, BUT I MUST SPEAK TO YOU
ADAM STARR! MY BOY WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO LOCATE YOUR BASE FOR WEEKS THE COUNCIL HAS APPROVED YOUR SOLAR LEGION PLAN
THAT'S FINE, ADMIRAL! I'M STARTING A SYSTEMATIC CLEANUP OF PIRATES RIGHT NOW! I MUST HAVE A CRUISER AND A CREW. I'M GOING TO VENUS!
GRANTED

1
ADAM'S ROCKET REACHES THE STEAMING, MUDDY, SURFACE OF VENUS.
2
THE FLASHING ROCKET BECOMES A SUBJECT OF INTEREST TO SOME VERY KEEN OBSERVERS OF ITS FLIGHT-----ARTHAK, THE SPACE PIRATE AND HIS VENUSIAN FISH-MEN!
3
ADAM STARR AND TWO OFFICERS SET OUT ON FOOT TO LOCATE THE PIRATE BASE....
THEY FIND THE SWAMP AREA IS NO PICNIC GROUND.
AFTER MILES OF SLOGGING THROUGH THE VENUSIAN MUD, ADAM CALLS A HALT
THERE'S ARTHAK'S HIDDEN AIR BASE,, WE'VE FOUND IT!


THEY FIND ARTHAK'S AIR BASE
ADAM IMMEDIATELY RADIOS THE LOCATION TO THE WAITING CRUISER..
A SEARING BLAST OF A HEAT RAY ENVELOPES THE SCOUTING PARTY IN A SEETHING HELL!
BANG
ADAM IS CATAPULTED OUT OF DANGER BY THE VIOLENCE OF THE EXPLOSION BUT HIS TWO FRIENDS PERISH IN THE BOILING INFERNO. MEANWHILE ARTHAK'S MUD TANK RUMBLES INTO VIEW...
ADAM NEVER SEES HIS CAPTORS APPROACHING AS HE SINKS BACK INTO THE CLINGING OOZE AND OBLIVION...
DAZED HE STRUGGLES TO HIS FEET

ARTHAK CAPTURES ADAM
AWAKE ARE YOU? WELL, MISTER PIRATE HUNTER, IN A MINUTE YOU'LL WISH YOU WERE KILLED IN THAT BLAST.
YOU'LL FIND VENUS A VERY UNHEALTHY PLANET, STARR. WHY THERE'S MONSTERS IN THIS MUD THAT WOULD FREEZE YER BLOOD TO ICE---AND THEY EAT ANYTHING---
THERE'S ONE NOW! A BEAUTY ISN'T HE? I HOPE YOU ENJOY HIS COMPANY
THE HUGE WORM-THING REARS ITSELF AND POISES MOMENTARILY ABOVE ITS INTENDED PREY
ADAM STRUGGLES VAINLY TO BREAK HIS BONDS BUT THEY DO NOT GIVE!

A HEAT BEAM SUDDENLY STABS ACROSS ADAM'S VISION BLASTING THE MONSTROUS WORM TO BITS!!
THE CRUISER HAS INTERCEPTED ADAM'S RADIO MESSAGE
MEANWHILE ARTHAK AND HIS BASE ENTER ETERNITY THE SAME WAY.
THAT WAS A JOB WELL DONE, STARR. ALL EARTH RINGS WITH PRAISE OF YOU AND YOUR MEN.
WE'RE JUST BEGINNING, SIR! NOW THAT THE VENUS UNIT IS ORGANIZED THE SOLAR LEGION IS READY TO RID MARS OF ITS VERMIN!
"AND SO ADAM STARR'S SOLAR LEGION PATROLS, ITS FIRST PLANET, LAW AND ORDER HAS COME TO VENUS."

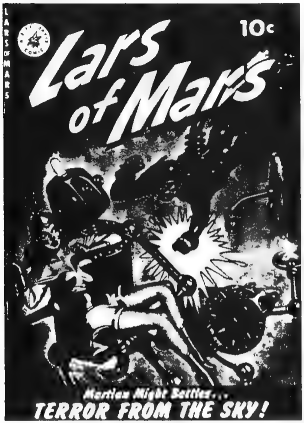
COVER GALLERY

Ziff-Davis is best known for their pulp magazines with lurid covers featuring leering monsters and scantily clad women who are rescued by heroic, ray gun armed males. In fact, many of their comic book covers were left over paintings which had been commissioned for their pulps. Often the interior stories were done second and designed to utilize the already-existing covers.

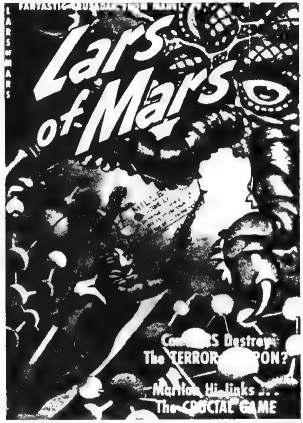
Odder still are those titles whose numbering sequence began with issue number ten with no issues one through nine preceding them, such as *Weird Adventures #10* or *Lars of Mars #10* and *#11*.

Krigstein, Kinstler, Toth, Powell, Murphy, Anderson, Kubert, Giunta, Sachs, and Green produced many of the stories which filled these books. Wally Wood was responsible for a fabulous nine-page story which appeared in the first issue of *Amazing Adventures*. With the irony only present in real life he would later do additional work for a book of the same title published by a completely different company and featuring the adventures of an iron masked villain who ruled a small Eastern European country.

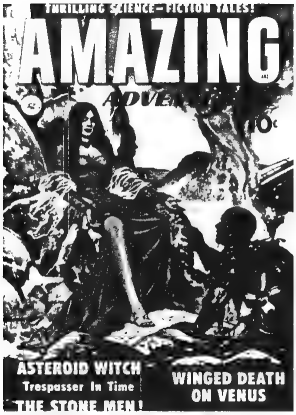
EERIE ADVENTURES #1 (1951)



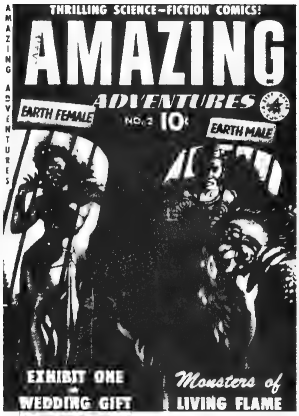
LARS OF MARS #10 (1951)



LARS OF MARS #11 (1951)

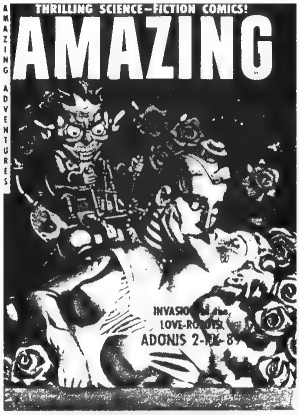


AMAZING ADVENTURES #1 (1950)



AMAZING ADVENTURES #2

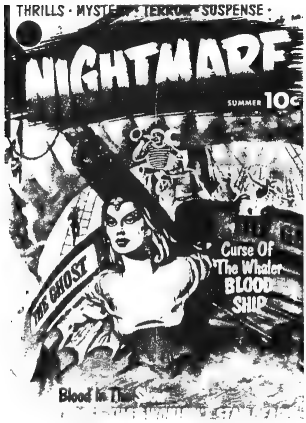
AMAZING ADVENTURES #3



AMAZING ADVENTURES #4

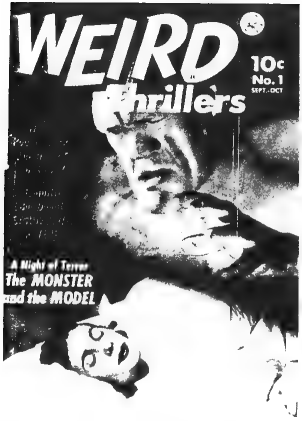
AMAZING ADVENTURES #5

AMAZING ADVENTURES #6

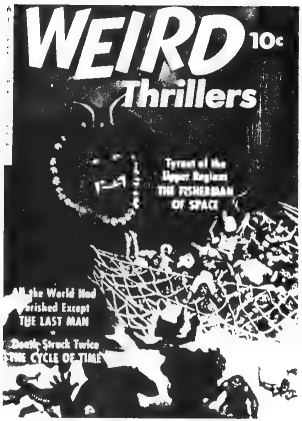


NIGHTMARE #1 (1952)

NIGHTMARE #2



WEIRD THRILLERS #1 (1951)



WEIRD THRILLERS #2

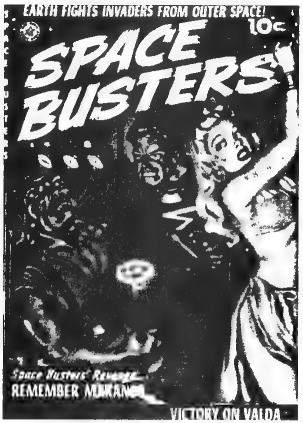
WEIRD THRILLERS #3

WEIRD THRILLERS #4

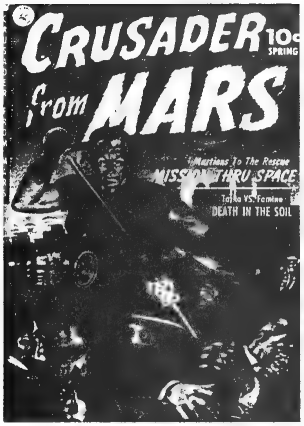
SPACE PATROL #1 (1952)

SPACE PATROL #2

SPACE BUSTERS #1 (1952)



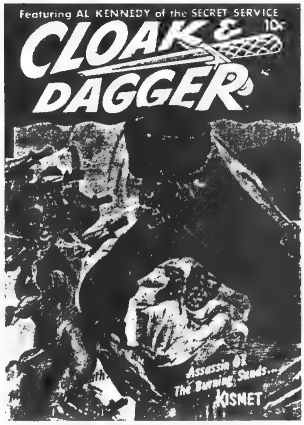
SPACE BUSTERS #2



CRUSADER FROM MARS #1 (1961

CRUSADER FROM MARS #2

WEIRD ADVENTURES #10 (1961)



CLOAK & DAGGER #2 (19

A Strip by Walt Kelly

SEAMAN
SY WHEELER
THE NAVY IS OUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE. BUT SEAMAN SY WHEELER SHOWS THAT GODS CAN DO MORE THAN RUN THE BATTLE WAGONS.
Late one night when the good people of Minooka are abed-
WELL KITTY, I'VE DONE IT. I'VE ENLISTED IN THE NAVY. BUT NOW THAT WE'RE ENGAGED, I KNOW YOU'LL BE WAITING FOR ME.
DON'T WORRY, I'LL WAIT.
BOO HOO... HE'S GONE. I WON'T SEE HIM FOR A YEAR.
A FEW DAYS LATER

FROM ANIMAL COMICS BY WALT KELLY

In a Hong Kong Tattoo Shop
HOOP LA, CAN PLEASE TO MAKEE TATTEE-TOO ON CHESTEE? GIRL'S NAME ALL SAME KITTY - CAN DO?
SURE, SAILOR, BUT YOU BETTER LEARN TO SPEAK ENGLISH IF YOU WANT TO STAY IN THE U.S. NAVY.
HEY! YOU'RE A FINE ARTIST - YOU'VE PRINTED IT BACKWARDS!
IT LOOKS LIKE THAT BECAUSE THE MIRROR IS UPSIDE DOWN! FIVE BUCKS, PLEASE!
KITTY
I'M GONNA HAVE A DOUBLE-BREASTED BLUE SERGE SUIT, A COLLAR AND A TIE TATTOOED ON ME - THEN I'LL NEVER HAVE TO BUY ANY CLOTHES.
YOUR PELT SHOULD FETCH FIVE BUCKS MORE IN THE MARKET NOW.
YOU'LL BE HANDY TO HAVE AROUND THE HOUSE, KITTY CAN CARVE RECIPES ON YOUR STOMACH -
AN' PUT OLD BOY FRIENDS' PHONE NUMBERS ON YER BACK!
Back on S
HOME AT LAST
GO AWAY, BOYS! I GOTTA CLINCH A DEAL - AND SHE'S SOME DEAL!
ARE THEY FEET OR IS THE NAVY MISSING A COUPLE OF CRUISERS?
THAT'S A LOT OF CANDY FOR ONE DEAL SY.
WHY, SY WHEELER! YOU'RE BACK!
WHAT ABOUT MY BACK?
MISS BURBLE LOOKS HAPPY. MUST HAVE BAD NEWS.
KITTY BECAME TIRED OF WAITING FOR YOU AND HAS JUST ANNOUNCED HER ENGAGEMENT TO HERMAN PREEVY!
WELL, GOOD BYE! HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR VISIT
TORPEDOED!
I'M GLAD ME DIDN'T BUY HER A FLAT IRON.

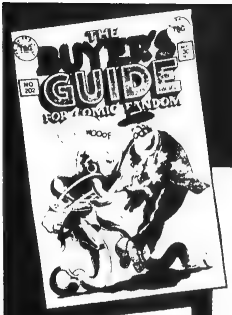
Several days later.
I'LL CHEER YOU UP, SY!
IF IT WASN'T SO NEAR PAY DAY, I'D COMMIT SUICIDE.
HERE COMES BETTY! SHE'S A FRIEND OF MINE - JUST THE GIRL TO PULL YOU OUT OF THE DUMPS.
NIX.
MY FRIEND, MR. WHEELER IS NEVER GONNA SPEAK TO ANOTHER WOMAN.
WHAT NEVER?
WELL HARDLY EVER.
BETTY ON MY MIND - BETTY IN MY HEART AND KITTY ON MY CHEST WHAT'LL I DO ~~?
KITTY
WHY NOT SKIN YOURSELF?
YOU COULD ALWAYS WALK ON YOUR HANDS AND SHE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO READ IT.
BE MORE SERIOUSER.
GEE!
BETTY
JUST THE QUICK FLICK OF A PEN CHUM!
Meanwhile
HEY! BETTY, AIN'T I SEEN YOU WITH SOME BIG UGLY DUMB GOB THIS WEEK?
DON'T SAY 'AIN'T,' PAUL.

At the local tattoo emporium
THERE! BETTY IS ENGRAVED PERMANENT ON MY HUMAN SKIN! ISN'T THAT ROMANTIC?
NO, THAT'S THREE DOLLARS AND SIXTY FIVE CENTS
NOW TO SHOW BETTY MY TATTOO AND THEN TO POP THE OLD QUESTION!
WHY DO YOU ALWAYS BUY YOUR GIRLS PEPPERMINTS?
GOOD EVENING — I LOVE YOU!
WHO!? ME!?
A CRAZY MAN!
I'LL COOL OFF THIS COOKIE.
YOO HOO LOOK!
CANDY
BETTY
OH SY - I WANT YOU TO MEET MY FIANCE - PAUL POODLE
GET OUT! YOU CAN'T MARRY A FISH.
NO-NO- THIS IS MR POODLE
OH — DO YOU LIKE PEPMINTS! MR POODLE?
BOY! YOU'RE A SKETCH — HOO HEE HEE HOO HA HO WAH HO! I LOVE PEPMINTS
NOT
WELL, HERE'S A WEDDING PRESENT!
SKROBSH!
YOU SHOULDN'T EAT SO FAST - MAYBE A LITTLE PEPMINT AND WATER WILL FIX YOU UP.
SOMEBODY GET A PUMMICK STUMP!
HAS A JOB GOT BLOCK UP AN
YOU SHOULD GET MORE LICORICE NEXT TIME.
SUPPOSE MR. POOZLE DIDN'T LIKE LICORICE?

Let us look in on Kitty and her fiance, Mr Preevy.
HERMAN PREEVY, STOP EATING ONIONS! EVERY TIME WE GO TO A RESTAURANT YOU HAUL OUT A BAG OF BERMUDAS.
Crunch Crunch
I JUST LOVES ONIONS.! THEY MAKES ME HEALTHY AND POWERFUL.!
TAKE THAT BANANA OUT OF MY FACE!
ONIONS MAY MAKE YOU STRONG, BUT ITS NOT IN THE HEAD.!
GOOD BYE.!
ALAS, BETTY IS LOST- LIFE IS EMPTY AND SO IS MY STOMACH. I'M GOING INTO THIS RESTAURANT AND EAT MYSELF TO DEATH BY CONSUMING $11.40 WORTH OF GRUB.! FAREWELL CLARENCE.
BUT IT'S FOOLISH AND BESIDES IT'S MY MONEY.!
WELL WELL IF IT ISN'T KITTY.!
CRACK
OH — HELLO CLARENCE
GOOD GRIEF.! IT'S MY OWN TRUE LOVE, SYCLOPS WHEELER AND I'VE KILLED HIM.!!
IF YOU HAVE, IT SAVES ME OVER ELEVEN BUCKS.
MY DEAR.!
♪ My Love Dove ♪
My Douon!

I'LL CALL FOR YOU IN THE CAR AT SIX!
WE'LL HAVE FUN!
WITH MY CASH!
I HAVE TO WORK TWICE AS HARD FOR MY DOUGH AS ANYBODY ELSE - ONCE GETTIN IT FROM UNCLE SAM AND ONCE GETTIN IT BACK FROM YOU!
BUT WHEN I'M MARRIED YOU CAN DROP IN FOR DINNER ANY-TIME YOU'RE IN PORT
BESIDES IF YOU FIGURE A WAY TO GET RID OF THIS 'BETTY' TATTOO, I'LL PAY YOU BACK WITH INTEREST — I BEEN FIDGERIN' MY HEAD TO THE BONE AND I'M SLEEPY --- I — GU- GUZ — LMPH X-- Z.Z.Z — H-ZZ
HMMMM — A LITTLE OF THIS AND BETTY'LL BE OVER DROWN
HAIR TONIC
BETTY
OOPS! IT ALL RAN OUT BY MISTAKE — HE'LL GROW ENOUGH HAIR TO HIRE OUT AS A RUG.
ZAMP
While across the hall
AH-JUST A MINUTES ANGELO - WE GO IN AN' TAKE A NAPS BEFORE THESE NEXT SHOW - YES?
AMAN CHERRA! WHAT'S A MATTER THESE LOCK?
YESSIR SY! NOTHIN' LIKE A GOOD OL' SHOWER
SWISH
SY! GREAT CAESAR — WHAT HAVE I DONE? — SY! - SY... SPEAK TO ME!

KITTY!
SY, IN ANOTHER WOMAN'S ARMS!
HOTEL
A YOUNG GAL AIN'T SAFE ON THE STREETS THESE TIMES, FRESH.
HONEST, KITTY I LOVE ONLY YOU — YOUR FACE IS EVER ON MY MIND.
YOUR NAME IS GRAVEN ON MY HEART.
BETTY
BROTHER, YOU SURE CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU READ NOW-A-DAYS, CAN YOU?!
ROWF!
NIX. NIX SY — I DIDN'T MEAN TO TURN YOU INTO A BEAR!
ANGELO NOT HURT. ANGELO LIKE YOU.
YEH — FOR SUPPER ANGELO LIKE ME
THAT BIG APE SHARIN' ME THAT WAY.
HO-HO-YES INDEED THAT TATTOO IS — UM-FOR-AH-ADMIRAL BEATTY — MY HERO-HEH — HEH — YESSIR.
YOU NOT ONLY CAN'T LIE — YOU CAN'T SPELL.
BETTY
BUM!
IF ALL I SAY IS NOT THE STRICT TRUTH — MAY I BE STRUCK FROM ABOVE
BETTY
WELL I'LL CLEAR OUT AND GIVE YOU A PLACE TO FALL. YOU MIGHT BE PLAYING FOR THIS TEAM, BUB, BUT YOU'VE GOT ON THE WRONG UNIFORM.



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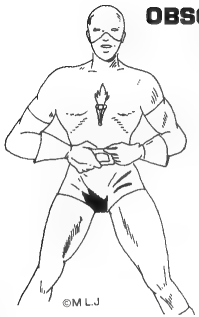
OBSCURE HEROES OF THE GOLDEN AGE



INFERNO

Beginning as a supporting character in the Steel Sterling strip, Inferno was promoted by MLJ and began to star in his own right as a feature in *Blue Ribbon Comics*. After making the transition he was first given a costume. This hero, whose only power was his flame breath and who did not have any secret identity, appeared in *Blue Ribbon* from issue 13 until 19. Paul Reinman was responsible for most of the stories.

THE BLACK WIDOW

Mystic #4 carried the first story of Claire Voyant, a young woman who was murdered and became the ambassador of Satan to the Earth. She returned to the mortal veil with the touch of instant death which she used to speed evil doers on their way to meet her master. She appeared in issues four through seven, excluding number six, of *Mystic* and in *All Select #1*. Her brief run saw her appear with artwork by such excellent craftsmen as Sahle & Kapitan and Stan Drake.

THE TWISTER

Paul Gustavson created and drew a hero who utilized the wind as his weapon by twisting so fast that he created a small tornado. Carrying a cyclone gun this character may have been the inspiration for the modern Red Tornado. Gustavson abandoned the character with the third issue of his seven issue run in *Blue Bolt Comics* second volume (Vol. 2, #1-7).

The TWISTER
by Paul Gustavson
"IF TONY, THE TORNADO READS THIS STORY—BEWARE! THE TWISTER WILL GET YOU IN THE NEXT ISSUE!" 'ATSA SOUND GOOD, SANTA MARIA— 'ATSA ME! 'WATSA MATTER FOR TH GUY WHO MAKE TH PICTURES—HE'SA MAKEA FUN OF ME!
SI-H-H-H-H!
HO-HO-HO! THIS TWISTER GUY—HE'SA HOKAY! PRETTY SMART GUY! LEMME SEE—WHATSA NEXA MONSA GONNA HAPPENS
The OFFICE OF TONY THE TORNADO—NOTORIOUS NEW YORK TAXI-CAB RACKETEER

Target Comics #7 Originally published by Novelty Press

BOYS— C'MERE! FIX'A DEM UP ALL OF 'EM FOR MAKIN' FUN OF TONY!
HE-HE AIN'T MAKIN' FUN OF YOU, TONY—THERE IS A TWISTER!
YEAH—HE COMES RIGHT OUT OF NOWHERE! YOU CAN'T SEE HIM..OR HEAR HIM.. OR NOTHIN' UNTIL HE'S RIGHT ON TOP OF YOU!
HE SA..DO ALL THAT? HERE'S TEN BOOKS— GO BUY ICE CREAM FOR ALL THE KIDS— TEN MAYBE THAT'LL FIX LIKE A ME! NO?
THAT WON'T CHANGE MY OPINION OF YOU, TONY!
NOW LISTEN YOU FAT BULLY—LEAVE THE INDEPENDENT CAB DRIVERS ALONE OR I'LL RUN YOU OUT OF THE COUNTRY!
HEY- YOU CAN'T TALK TO MY BOSS LIKE THAT!
I WUD BE SURPRISED AT WHAT I CAN DO!
ZWISH!

THE POWERFUL BLOW OF THE TWISTER SENDS THE THUG ACROSS THE ROOM AND THROUGH THE WALL....
KRASH!
IF ANY OF YOU YEGGS WOULD LIKE TO TRY ANYTHING, STEP RIGHT UP!
AN' HE'S A NO LIKE ME! GULP!
THAT WAS ONLY A SAMPLE, TONY! I'VE GIVEN YOU A WARNING... AND IF YOU WON'T TAKE IT, I'LL BE BACK!
SUDDEN WHIRL OF HIS POWERFUL ARMS— AND THE TWISTER BEGINS TO DISAPPEAR.....
S'LONG, BOYS!
THEN— A SUDDEN SHARP WHIRLWIND BOWLS OVER TONY AND HIS MEN LIKE TENPINS.....

THE MEN GAPE IN AMAZEMENT FOR A MINUTE....
Then
HEY—WHAT'SA MATTER FOR ME—LETTIN' SOMEBODY PUSH ME AROUND! HEY—GET'SUM UP!
I GOT A JOB FOR YOU—FIX 'EM UP NORTON'S CABS! C'MON—STEP ON IT!
A SHORT TIME LATER, BEDLAM BREAKS OUT IN NEW YORK CITY! TONY'S CABS SMASH INTO THOSE OWNED BY NORTON—TYING UP TRAFFIC.... INJURING PEOPLE....AND THROWING THE STREETS INTO UTTER CONFUSION....
IN HIS OFFICE, NORTON HEARS OF WHAT IS GOING ON AND IMMEDIATELY CALLS THE POLICE...
WHY CAN'T YOU DO ANYTHING, SARGE?
WE CAN'T LINK THE CABS TO TONY HIMSELF! EVERY CAB HE HAS IS REGISTERED IN THE NAME OF THE DRIVER! ALL WE CAN DO IS PULL THEM IN FOR RECKLESS DRIVING!
WHAT? HOLY SMOKES—I WON'T HAVE A CAB LEFT ON THE STREETS BEFORE THE DAY IS OVER! YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING AND DO IT FAST!

MEANWHILE, A DYNAMITE TRUCK STOPS AT THE TOP OF THE HILL IN FRONT OF NORTON'S CAB CO
EXPL
I DON'T LIKE THIS BLOWIN' UP PLACES—IT'S TOO MUCH LIKE MURDER!
SHUT UP! HERE—THE STEERING WHEEL IS TIED! GET SET TO JUMP— I'M GONNA RELEASE THE HAND BRAKE
AS THE MEN LEAP FROM THE DYNAMITE TRUCK A TERRIFIC WIND SUDDENLY BLOWS UP IN THE ALLEY..
TH' TWISTER!
WITH THE TRUCK STOPPED, THE TWISTER TURNS TO THE MEN IN THE ALLEY
JUST AS THE DYNAMITE TRUCK NEARS NORTON'S GARAGE, THE TWISTER STRIKES— SENDING IT STREAKING AROUND THE CORNER WHERE IT COMES TO A STOP....
THEN—HE STRIKES!

A SPLIT SECOND LATER— THE TWISTER, HIMSELF, STREAKS THROUGH THE AIR!
OKAY, BUD— WHO PUT YOU UP TO THIS?
NOBODY!
OH YEAH?
AFTER A BARRAGE OF BLOWS PACKED WITH DYNAMITE...
IT WAS TONY, TH' TORNADO!
THANKS— NOW I'VE A CALL TO MAKE!
PEOPLE STARE IN AMAZEMENT AS A POWERFUL WHIRLWIND STREAKS ACROSS MANHATTAN
..AND SETTLES OVER TONY, THE TORNADO'S GARAGE..
MEOW!

A BULLET FROM YOUR GUN WOULDN'T HARM ME — BUT I JUST WANT TO SHOW YOU HOW QUICKLY I COULD BLOW YOU TO BITS WITH MY AIR GUN!
YOU THINK YOU TAKE CARE OF TONY, EH?
RIGHT — AND DON'T TELL ME I DIDN'T WARN YOU!
?
NOW, I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND MY LOOKING FOR A FEW PRIVATE PAPERS THE POLICE MIGHT WANT!
WELL — SIGNED STATEMENTS BY YOUR CAB DRIVERS THAT YOU OWN THE CABS REGISTERED IN THEIR NAMES! NOT BAD!
OH-OH! TONY HAS LEFT!
YOU WON'T GET AWAY AS EASILY AS THAT!
THE STARTING OF A CAR IN THE GARAGE BELOW ATTRACTS THE TWISTER.

BARELY A FEW SECONDS LATER, THE TWISTER IS AGAIN A WHIRLING CYCLONE AND SETTLES BEHIND TONY'S CAR—PUSHING IT TOWARD THE RIVER....
EEEEOW!
HOLY CATS!
LOOK OUT—UGH!
PASSING TWO POLICEMEN, THE TWISTER HURLS TONY'S RECORDS AT THEM.....
MIKE—LOOK AT THIS—THE RECORDS OF TONY THE TORNADO'S TAXI-CAB RACKET—THE ONES THE D.A. HAS BEEN TRYING TO GET! BOY—THIS IS ENOUGH TO SEND HIM UP THE RIVER FOR LIFE!
MEANWHILE, TONY'S CAR HEADS OUT OVER THE RIVER....
.. SKIMMING ON TOP OF THE WATER LIKE A POWERFUL MOTOR BOAT..
.. AND FINALLY SETTLING ON THE DECK OF A TRAMP STEAMER, HEADING FOR THE OPEN SEA..
HEY—WHERE IN SAM HILL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
WHAT'SA DIF'? YOU JUST DROP ME OFF SOMEA PLACE WHERE THEY AIN'T GOTTA NO TAXI-CABS! I NO WANNA SEE ONE FOR THE RESTA MY LIFE!
The TWISTER STRIKES AGAIN IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF BLUE BOLT!

Wolverton

Weird! It's the only way to sum up any sane person's reaction to the works of Basil Wolverton. Whether he is producing science fiction, superheroes, or humor, he is a master of his craft and produces some of the strangest but most interesting comic stories around. He does so with wit and verve unmatched in the field.

His work is immediately recognizable and he does not blend in to the background as do most of the other comic book artists who have worked in the field. If this alone is not enough to distinquish him the sheer intelligence of the material is. And that is why he has such a strong following although he has done so little work in so many years.

Wolverton was always a loner and unlike most other fellow craftsmen he refused to bow to the wishes of the publishers and work in New York City. Instead he remained a resident of the Pacific Northwest. "Publishers liked to have artists right under their thumbs at all times. That had its advantages for the artists, but I would rather have foregone those things and have more freedom otherwise," was Wolverton's comment as recorded by Ron Goulart. "No one else lived as far away as I did."

So Wolverton remained in Vancouver, Washington, where he produced his work and delivered it by mail. Today this is common among comic book professionals with a large contingent living in California and other strays spread thoughout the country, but in his day it was not. And it further illustrates the iconoclasm which appeared in his work as well as in his life.

Perhaps his best known character was Spacehawk which appeared in thirty issues of *Target Comics*, although cover featured only once during the entire run. The character was never a large sales success but, did develop a very strong following. It was part of a natural evolution beginning with Wolverton's interest in science fiction, continuing through such works as Spacehawks for *Circus Comics*, the Space Patrol for *Amazing Mystery Funnies*, and Meteor Martin for *Amazing Man Comics*. Spacehawk came at the conclusion of this trend and demonstrated the highest point of Wolverton's serious work both artistically and in popularity.

Spacehawk's adventures took place in the furthest reaches of the universe only shifting to more mundane, more earth-bound surroundings under durress. The change was brought about due to pressure from the PTA and other such groups upon the publisher. These groups forced Novelty Press and others to tone-down the work that they were issuing and as Wolverton put it, "Then came the war, and the editor wanted to bring Spacehawk down to Earth and keep him there. I had the nerve to argue with him that it would kill the strip. But the publisher wanted it that way." It killed the strip.

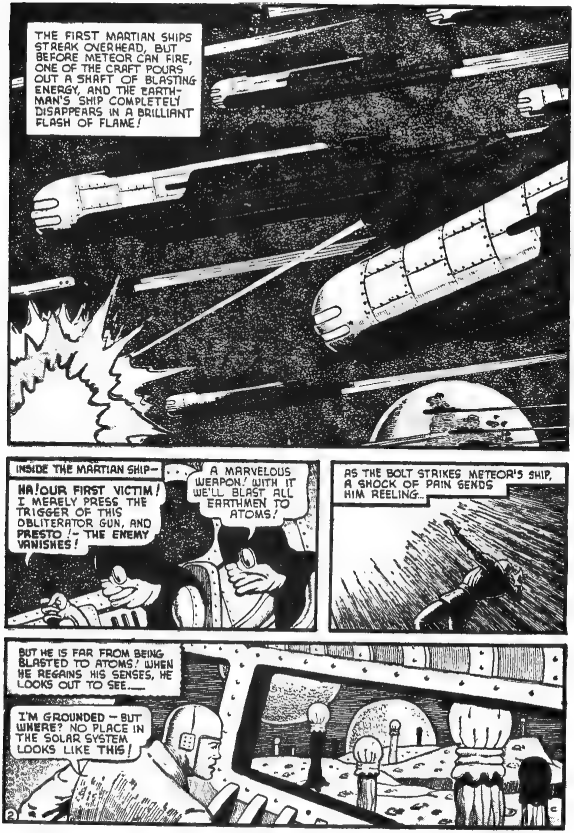
Even so Wolverton's view of the world is eccentric and far different from that of most others. His landmarks do not resemble their counterparts here on our world. His renditions are interesting and far from commonplace even when he draws the most normal scenery.

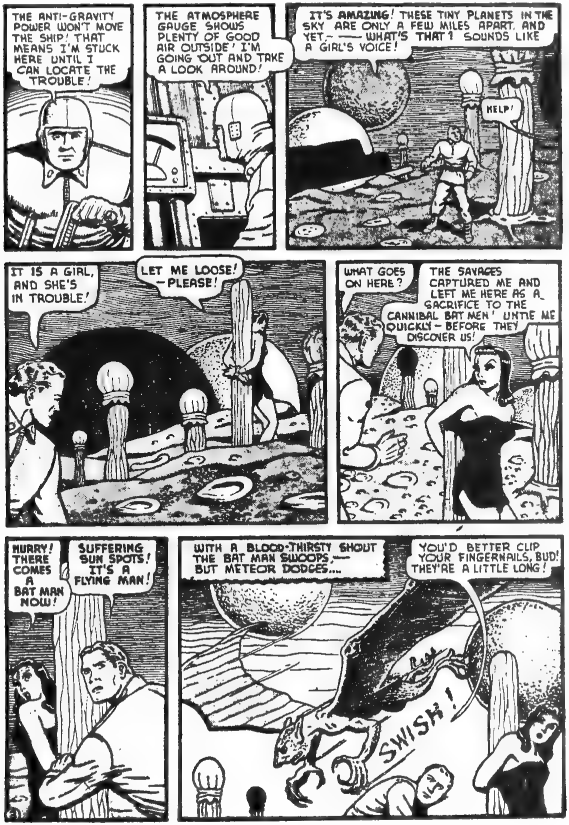
The artwork is intricate and composed of rigorous pen-and-ink detail. He enjoyed drawing machinery and it shows. His detail, whether it is that of the Grand Canyon or the nuts-and-bolts of various equipment, is complete. His linework is extensive, perhaps overly so. His slow and painstaking style, requiring almost a full day per page, is not well suited for the field in which he chose to work, a field more oriented towards the artist who grinds out pages at a very quick pace and collects a small amount per page for a very large number of pages. However, we, the reading audience, certainly benefit from the care taken and have the opportunity to read comic book stories that are truely a labor of love.

Wolverton later turned his hand to humorous art for various publications including the recent *Plop* issued by DC. But that is a story for a future issue of this magazine as here we are concerned with his scien-science fiction tales.

AMAZING MAN
COMICS
No. 26
JAN.
10¢
DON'T MISS THIS STORY OF AMAZING MAN'S LATEST AND MOST SPECTACULAR ADVENTURE

The STRANGE ADVENTURES of METEOR MARTIN
METEOR MARTIN, ACE PILOT OF THE MOON PATROL, IS ON DUTY IN HIS SPACE-SHIP, GUARDING THE AMERICAN OBSERVATORIES ON THE MOON.....
BASIL WOLVERTON
SUDDENLY
GREAT JUMPING JUPITER! THE SKY IS FILLED WITH SPACE-SHIPS! THE MARTIANS HAVE COME AT LAST TO ATTACK THE EARTH!
METEOR MARTIN CALLING AMERICA! MARTIAN WARSHIPS ARE APPROACHING IN GREAT NUMBERS!
TOO LATE FOR ME TO ESCAPE! I ONLY HOPE I CAN PICK OFF ONE OF THOSE MONSTERS WITH MY FLAME CANNON BEFORE THEY GET ME!

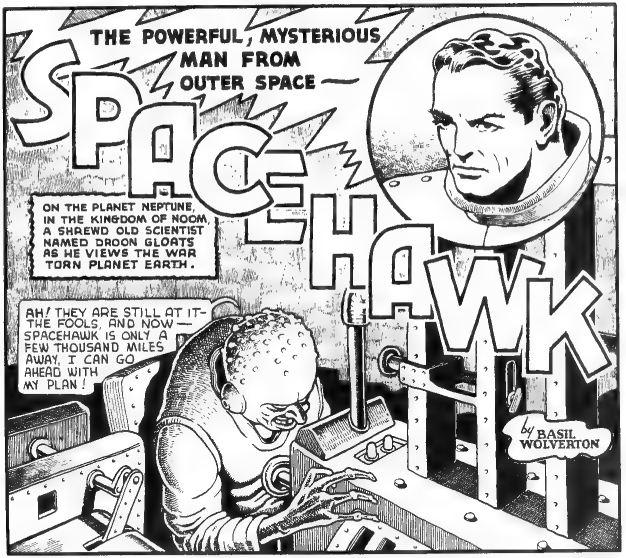

THE FIRST MARTIAN SHIPS STREAK OVERHEAD, BUT BEFORE METEOR CAN FIRE, ONE OF THE CRAFT POURS OUT A SHAFT OF BLASTING ENERGY, AND THE EARTHMAN'S SHIP COMPLETELY DISAPPEARS IN A BRILLIANT FLASH OF FLAME!
INSIDE THE MARTIAN SHIP—
HA! OUR FIRST VICTIM! I MERELY PRESS THE TRIGGER OF THIS OBLITERATOR GUN, AND PRESTO!— THE ENEMY VANISHES!
A MARVELOUS WEAPON! WITH IT WE'LL BLAST ALL EARTHMEN TO ATOMS!
AS THE BOLT STRIKES METEOR'S SHIP, A SHOCK OF PAIN SENDS HIM REELING...
BUT HE IS FAR FROM BEING BLASTED TO ATOMS! WHEN HE REGAINS HIS SENSES, HE LOOKS OUT TO SEE...
I'M GROUNDED — BUT WHERE? NO PLACE IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM LOOKS LIKE THIS!


THE ANTI-GRAVITY POWER WON'T MOVE THE SHIP! THAT MEANS I'M STUCK HERE UNTIL I CAN LOCATE THE TROUBLE!
THE ATMOSPHERE GAUGE SHOWS PLENTY OF GOOD AIR OUTSIDE! I'M GOING OUT AND TAKE A LOOK AROUND!
IT'S AMAZING! THESE TINY PLANETS IN THE SKY ARE ONLY A FEW MILES APART AND YET— —— WHAT'S THAT? SOUNDS LIKE A GIRL'S VOICE!
HELP!
IT IS A GIRL, AND SHE'S IN TROUBLE!
LET ME LOOSE! —PLEASE!
WHAT GOES ON HERE?
THE SAVAGES CAPTURED ME AND LEFT ME HERE AS A SACRIFICE TO THE CANNIBAL BAT MEN! UNTIE ME QUICKLY— BEFORE THEY DISCOVER US!
HURRY! THERE COMES A BAT MAN NOW!
SUFFERING SUN SPOTS! IT'S A FLYING MAN!
WITH A BLOOD-THIRSTY SHOUT THE BAT MAN SWOOPS,— BUT METEOR DODGES....
YOU'D BETTER CLIP YOUR FINGERNAILS, BUD! THEY'RE A LITTLE LONG!
SWISH!

AS THE BAT MAN WHIRLS FOR A SECOND ATTACK, METEOR RUSHES IN.....
OR, STILL BETTER, PERHAPS I'D BETTER DO THE CLIPPING — ON THE CHIN!
CRACK!
YOU'VE KNOCKED HIM OUT! NOW WE ARE IN FOR IT!
TOO BAD MY SHIP WON'T FLY!
IT'S NOT FAR TO MY VILLAGE! COME ON!
LOOK!
ANGERED BY METEOR'S INTERFERENCE, THE SAVAGES OF THE REGION DASH INTO VIEW....
COME AHEAD, YOU FREAKS!
METEOR'S STRONGER EARTH MUSCLES ENABLE HIM TO HURL THE FIRST SAVAGE BACK AGAINST THE OTHERS....
SOME FUN, EH, KIDS?
WHAM!

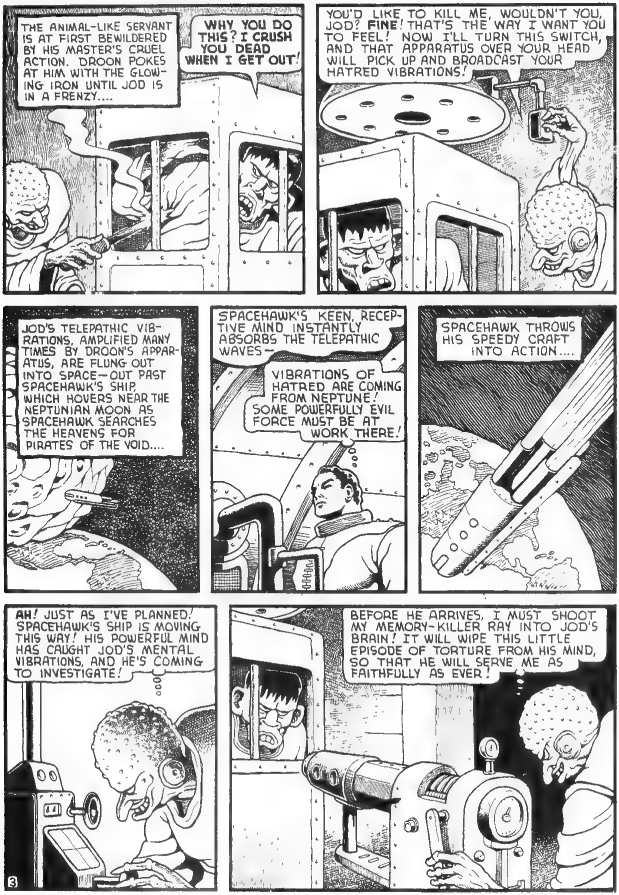
AND HERE'S MORE FOR GOOD MEASURE!
YOU'VE SAVED US! THEY'RE RUNNING AWAY!
NOW — WHICH WAY TO YOUR HOME?
THIS WAY! KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN! THIS JUNGLE IS FULL OF CREATURES!
I'LL SAY IT IS!
OH! — THAT'S ONLY A JUNGLE HORSE! MOST OF THEM ARE GENTLE! LOOK! I'LL SHOW YOU HOW WE CAN GET A RIDE INTO THE VILLAGE!
SEE? WE OFTEN USE THEM FOR CARRYING US ABOUT. NOW I'LL SOON BE HOME!
SAY! YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ME YET WHAT PLANET THIS IS! I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW I CAME TO BE HERE!
A FIGURE SUDDENLY BLOCKS THE PATH...
SO! THIS IS WHERE YOU'VE BEEN! SEARCHING PARTIES ARE OUT AFTER YOU, RANA, AND HERE YOU ARE, GADDING ABOUT WITH THIS STRANGE BEING! WHO IS HE?

DON'T BE INSOLENT, GROOB! THIS MAN SAVED ME FROM THE BAT MEN AND DESERT SAVAGES!
A FINE STORY! COME WITH ME!
TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME!
WHY, YOU —! YOU CAN'T TALK THAT WAY TO ME! REMEMBER — I'M GOING TO BE GOVERNOR OF THIS REGION!
THAT'S ENOUGH ROUGH STUFF, FELLOW!
SILENCE, YOU JUNGLE PIG! I'LL ATTEND TO YOU LATER!
WHY WAIT?
WHOP
FOOL! THAT WILL COST YOU YOUR LIFE!
SCRAM, OR I'LL LET YOU HAVE IT AGAIN!
THERE HE GOES, BUT HE'LL BE BACK WITH HIS MEN! I APPRECIATE WHAT YOU'VE DONE, BUT NOW IT WON'T BE SAFE FOR YOU TO ENTER THE VILLAGE! I'LL GO ON ALONE!
NONSENSE! I'M GOING WITH YOU! THIS IS JUST BEGINNING TO BE INTERESTING!
Where IS METEOR MARTIN AND HOW HAS HE COME TO BE THERE?
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?


THE POWERFUL, MYSTERIOUS MAN FROM OUTER SPACE —
SPACEHAWK
ON THE PLANET NEPTUNE, IN THE KINGDOM OF NOOM, A SHREWD OLD SCIENTIST NAMED DROON GLORTS AS HE VIEWS THE WAR TORN PLANET EARTH.
AH! THEY ARE STILL AT IT— THE FOOLS, AND NOW — SPACEHAWK IS ONLY A FEW THOUSAND MILES AWAY, I CAN GO AHEAD WITH MY PLAN!
by BASIL WOLVERTON

DROON IMMEDIATELY LEAVES HIS LABORATORY, WHICH IS IN A REMOTE PART OF THE KINGDOM, AND FLIES TO THE ROYAL PALACE....
BEING A FAMOUS SCIENTIST, HE IS QUICKLY GRANTED AN AUDIENCE WITH QUEEN HABA, RULER OF NOOM.
MY DEAR QUEEN, I HAVE WAYS OF KNOWING MANY THINGS, AND I AM AWARE THAT IT WOULD MEAN MUCH TO YOU IF THE GREAT SPACEHAWK WERE TO RETURN THE FEELING YOU HAVE CONCERNING HIM!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION YOU CAME TO DISCUSS AFFAIRS OF STATE — NOT MY PERSONAL AFFAIRS!

YOUR PARDON, BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT SPACEHAWK IS STILL STAYING CLOSE TO NEPTUNE! HE IS LOATH TO LEAVE, BECAUSE HE IS MAD ABOUT YOU!
MAD ABOUT ME? HOW CAN YOU MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT?
I CAN PROVE MY STATEMENT, YOUR HIGHNESS! IT IS WITHIN MY POWER TO BRING SPACEHAWK TO YOU! AND ONCE HE MEETS YOU AGAIN, HE WILL DECLARE HIS LOVE! I CAN PROMISE YOU THAT!
THEN PROVE IT! BUT IF YOU FAIL, AND BRING EMBARRASSMENT TO SPACEHAWK OR TO ME, YOU WILL REGRET IT!
I SHALL PROVE IT, MY QUEEN — FOR A CONSIDERATION! ALL I ASK IS THE BARREN LANDS OF THE OJAH VALLEY, SO THAT I MAY CONDUCT CERTAIN AGRICULTURAL TESTS. DEED IT TO ME, AND I SHALL DISCREETLY ARRANGE MATTERS IN SUCH A WAY THAT SPACEHAWK WILL QUICKLY ARRIVE!
SO YOU'RE DEMANDING A PRICE FOR PLAYING CUPID! WELL — THE REGION IS WORTHLESS. I SHALL DEED IT TO YOU — IF AND WHEN YOU SHOW ME THAT YOU ARE RIGHT IN THIS MATTER!
AFTER DROON GOES—
IF ONLY I CAN RELY ON DROON! THE OJAH VALLEY IS A SMALL PRICE TO PAY IF I COULD LEARN THAT SPACEHAWK CARES FOR ME!
MY PLAN IS WORKING! SOON I SHALL BE IN POSSESSION OF THE OJAH VALLEY!
BACK IN HIS LABORATORY, DROON BEGINS HIS STRANGE TASK BY FORCING HIS SERVANT, JOD, INTO A CAGE.
I NO UNDERSTAND! WHAT FOR I GO IN CAGE?
DON'T ASK QUESTIONS! GET IN THERE!
AND NOW, WITH THIS HOT IRON, I'M GOING TO ROUSE YOUR HATRED! IT IS THE THING THAT WILL BRING SPACEHAWK TO ME!


THE ANIMAL-LIKE SERVANT IS AT FIRST BEWILDERED BY HIS MASTER'S CRUEL ACTION. DROON POKES AT HIM WITH THE GLOWING IRON UNTIL JOD IS IN A FRENZY....
WHY YOU DO THIS? I CRUSH YOU DEAD WHEN I GET OUT!
YOU'D LIKE TO KILL ME, WOULDN'T YOU, JOD? FINE! THAT'S THE WAY I WANT YOU TO FEEL! NOW I'LL TURN THIS SWITCH, AND THAT APPARATUS OVER YOUR HEAD WILL PICK UP AND BROADCAST YOUR HATRED VIBRATIONS!
JOD'S TELEPATHIC VIBRATIONS, AMPLIFIED MANY TIMES BY DROON'S APPARATUS, ARE FLUNG OUT INTO SPACE—OUT PAST SPACEHAWK'S SHIP, WHICH HOVERS NEAR THE NEPTUNIAN MOON AS SPACEHAWK SEARCHES THE HEAVENS FOR PIRATES OF THE VOID....
SPACEHAWK'S KEEN, RECEPTIVE MIND INSTANTLY ABSORBS THE TELEPATHIC WAVES—
VIBRATIONS OF HATRED ARE COMING FROM NEPTUNE! SOME POWERFULLY EVIL FORCE MUST BE AT WORK THERE!
SPACEHAWK THROWS HIS SPEEDY CRAFT INTO ACTION....
AH! JUST AS I'VE PLANNED! SPACEHAWK'S SHIP IS MOVING THIS WAY! HIS POWERFUL MIND HAS CAUGHT JOD'S MENTAL VIBRATIONS, AND HE'S COMING TO INVESTIGATE!
BEFORE HE ARRIVES, I MUST SHOOT MY MEMORY-KILLER RAY INTO JOD'S BRAIN! IT WILL WIPE THIS LITTLE EPISODE OF TORTURE FROM HIS MIND, SO THAT HE WILL SERVE ME AS FAITHFULLY AS EVER!
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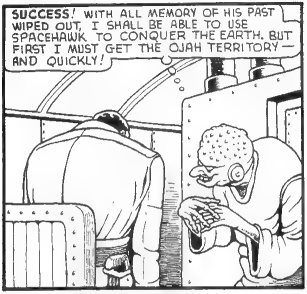
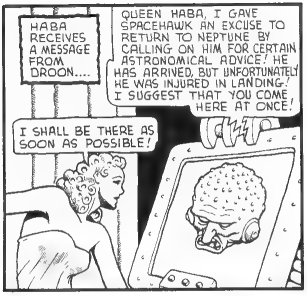
BUT BEFORE DROON CAN GET THE RAY PROJECTOR IN OPERATION, SPACEHAWK SUDDENLY STRIDES INTO THE ROOM....
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHY IS THAT MAN IN THE CAGE?
SPACEHAWK! THIS IS INDEED A PLEASANT SURPRISE! YOU HONOR ME BY VISITING MY LABORATORY! AND YOU ARE JUST IN TIME TO WATCH AN INTERESTING OPERATION — SOMETHING ENTIRELY HUMANE AND ABOVE BOARD, I ASSURE YOU!
ON THE CONTRARY, THERE'S SOMETHING QUITE WRONG HERE! LET ME LOOK AT THAT MACHINE!
NOW I MUST STAKE EVERYTHING ON MY HYPNOTIC ABILITY! HIS MIND MAY BE STRONGER THAN MINE IN SOME RESPECTS, BUT NO MIND CAN WITHSTAND THE TERRIFIC POWER OF HYPNOSIS I HAVE DEVELOPED IN MY BRAIN!
SOME SORT OF RAY MACHINE, EH? WHY WERE YOU ABOUT TO USE IT ON YOUR PRISONER?
LOOK AT ME! YOU ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THAT MACHINE! I AM YOUR MASTER! DO AS I COMMAND!
NOW STAND WHERE YOU ARE—AND DO NOT MOVE!
AH! THE GREAT SPACEHAWK IS PARALYZED UNDER MY POWERFUL HYPNOTIC SPELL! BUT I DARE NOT TAKE ANY CHANCES! I SHALL PIERCE HIS BRAIN WITH THE MEMORY-KILLER RAY! THEN I CAN HANDLE HIM AS I WOULD A CHILD — EVEN FROM A GREAT DISTANCE!
THE MACHINE BEGINS TO WHINE, AND A GLOWING BEAM STABS FORTH TO ENVELOP SPACEHAWK'S HEAD....


SUCCESS! WITH ALL MEMORY OF HIS PAST WIPED OUT, I SHALL BE ABLE TO USE SPACEHAWK TO CONQUER THE EARTH, BUT FIRST I MUST GET THE OJAH TERRITORY— AND QUICKLY!


HABA RECEIVES A MESSAGE FROM DROON....
QUEEN HABA, I GAVE SPACEHAWK AN EXCUSE TO RETURN TO NEPTUNE BY CALLING ON HIM FOR CERTAIN ASTRONOMICAL ADVICE! HE HAS ARRIVED, BUT UNFORTUNATELY HE WAS INJURED IN LANDING! I SUGGEST THAT YOU COME HERE AT ONCE!
I SHALL BE THERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

NOW LISTEN CAREFULLY TO ME! YOU WILL HAVE A VISITOR SOON. YOU MUST TELL HER ALL THAT I COMMAND YOU TO TELL HER!
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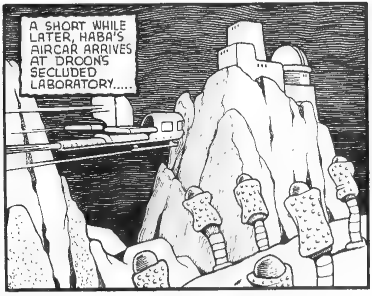
A SHORT WHILE LATER, HABA'S AIRCAR ARRIVES AT DROON'S SECLUDED LABORATORY.....

HOW IS HE? MAY I SEE HIM?
THIS WAY, YOUR HIGHNESS! HIS INJURY IS NOT AS SERIOUS AS I THOUGHT AT FIRST! A TANK OF COMPRESSED AIR EXPLODED AS HE STEPPED INTO THE SHIP'S AIRLOCK CHAMBER. HE HAS REGAINED HIS SENSES, BUT THE CONCUSSION SEEMS TO HAVE LEFT HIS MIND CLOUDED!
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QUEEN HABA! IS IT REALLY YOU?
YES, SPACEHAWK! I'VE COME TO SEE IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU!
PARDON ME. I MUST GO AND PREPARE A STIMULANT FOR HIM!

THE ONLY STIMULANT I NEED IS YOU, HABA!
WHY SPACEHAWK! WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
FOR A LONG TIME I'VE BEEN WANTING TO TELL YOU WHAT YOU MEAN TO ME, HABA! AND NOW THAT THIS HAS HAPPENED—
SPACEHAWK! ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME THAT YOU—
PERHAPS, THOUGH, THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO SAY MUCH ABOUT IT! MY HEAD—IT FEELS A BIT QUEER. THAT WAS QUITE A A BLAST IN MY SHIP YOU KNOW! IT'S A GOOD THING MY FRIEND DROON BROUGHT ME IN!
PERFECT! EVERYTHING IS WORKING OUT TO MY ADVANTAGE!
HERE, SPACEHAWK! DRINK THIS! IT WILL HELP REVIVE YOU!
DROON, WE MUST GET HIM TO A DOCTOR! HE ACTS AND TALKS AS THOUGH HIS MIND WERE IN A FOG!
NO! NO! HE REQUIRES NO DOCTOR! A FEW DAYS REST HERE IS ALL HE NEEDS!
INCIDENTALLY, YOUR HIGHNESS I THINK YOU'LL AGREE THAT I'M NOW ENTITLED TO THAT DEED TO THE OJAH VALLEY! I'VE EARNED IT BY BRINGING YOU AND SPACEHAWK TOGETHER, JUST AS I PROMISED!
WHY ARE YOU IN SUCH A HURRY FOR YOUR REWARD? YOU'LL GET IT JUST AS SOON AS I CAN BE SURE THAT SPACEHAWK IS WELL!
SPACEHAWK'S KEEN EARS CATCH EVERY WORD. SUDDENLY HE LEAPS UP.....
DON'T WORRY, HABA! I'M PERFECTLY WELL! AND NOW THAT I KNOW WHAT YOUR PURPOSE IS, DROON, I'M GOING TO—
WHAT— WHAT'S THIS? STAND BACK THERE! I COMMAND YOU TO STAND BACK!

FOOL! YOUR HYPNOTISM AND YOUR MEMORY-KILLER RAY HAVEN'T HAD THE SLIGHTEST EFFECT ON MY MIND! I'VE BEEN PLAYING ALONG TO DISCOVER YOUR GAME! NOW THAT YOUR MIND IS FULL OF FEAR, I CAN READ IN IT WHY YOU WANT THE OJAH VALLEY! YOU'VE FOUND THAT IT CONTAINS RICH MINERAL DEPOSITS! YOU INTEND TO USE THEM IN YOUR PLAN TO CONQUER THE EARTH. NOW THAT THEY ARE EMBROILED IN A WAR AND ARE AT YOUR MERCY, BUT AS LONG AS I LIVE TO DEFEND THE GREAT NATION OF AMERICA, NO ONE IS GOING TO DO THAT!
YOU MISERABLE CHEAT! YOU'LL SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE IN A DUNGEON!
PERHAPS THIS WILL CHANGE YOUR PLANS! UP WITH YOUR HANDS — BOTH OF YOU!
I HATE TO STRIKE AN OLD WEASEL LIKE YOU, BUT IT'S NECESSARY!
SPACEHAWK MOVES SO SWIFTLY THAT DROON HAS NO TIME TO ACT....
OH, SPACEHAWK! I KNOW YOU'LL NEVER FORGIVE ME FOR THIS!
THERE'S NOTHING TO FORGIVE, HABA! I'M GLAD OF THE CHANCE TO UNCOVER DROON'S TREACHERY!
THEY'LL REGRET THIS! IN ANOTHER MINUTE THEY'LL BE MY PRISONERS!
DROON STEALTHILY CRAWLS TOWARD A HIDDEN SWITCH IN THE NEXT ROOM..
THE NEXT INSTANT THE HEAVY DOOR SLAMS SHUT....
WE'RE TRAPPED!
BANG!

SPACEHAWK HURLS HIS STEELY BODY ACROSS THE ROOM
WE WON'T BE TRAPPED FOR LONG!
HE — HE'S BREAKING THRU THE DOOR!
I'LL GET ANOTHER GUN AND FINISH THEM BEFORE THEY CAN ESCAPE!
STAND BEHIND ME, HABA! THAT DEVIL MAY BE WAITING FOR US WITH ANOTHER ATOM GUN!
MEANWHILE JOD, WHOM DROON HAS NEGLECTED TO TREAT WITH THE MEMORY-KILLER RAY, FINALLY MANAGES TO ESCAPE....
CAGE NO HOLD JOD! I TOO STRONG!
NOW I FIND MASTER DROON, WHEN I FIND, I KILL!
DROON OBTAINS ANOTHER GUN, AND CLIMBS TO A VANTAGE POINT ON THE TOP OF THE BUILDING. FROM THERE HE SEES SPACEHAWK AND HABA HURRYING TO THE LANDING SPACE WHERE THEIR SHIPS ARE ...
THIS IS MY CHANCE. THEY'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT HAPPENED!
A DEADLY BOLT OF FLAME SWEEPS DOWN. ONLY SPACEHAWK'S INSTANT ACTION SAVES THEIR LIVES!

HE THINKS HE'S FAST ENOUGH TO DODGE IT, EH? THIS TIME I WON'T MISS!
AS DROON AIMS AGAIN, A GAUNT HAND SEIZES HIS ARM.....
YOU — JOD! HOW DID YOU GET LOOSE? GO AWAY FROM ME!
THIS TIME I NO LOOK INTO YOUR EYES! I KILL YOU FIRST!
DON'T! DON'T! GET BACK FROM THE EDGE, YOU IMBECILE!
HOW YOU LIKE TO FLY THRU AIR — HUH?
AS DROON STAGGERS BACK, HE CLUTCHES JOD, AND BOTH MEN PLUNGE TO THE JAGGED ROCKS HUNDREDS OF FEET BELOW.....
HOW HORRIBLE!
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASY TO DODGE THAT ERRATIC FIRING ALL THE WAY TO MY SHIP! THEN I COULD HAVE BLASTED DROON FROM THE SKY! FORTUNATELY, I'VE BEEN SPARED THE JOB!
I MUST GO NOW, HABA. UNCLE SAM NEEDS ME-MORE THAN YOU. BUT I'LL COME BACK TO SEE YOU SOON!
OH, SPACEHAWK! IT'S WONDERFUL TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT! GOODBYE — AND THANK YOU!
A NEW MENACE TO THE PEACE AND SECURITY OF AMERICA IS EXPOSED BY SPACEHAWK IN NEXT MONTH'S
TARGET COMICS

Conservation For Comic Collectors, Part I

The Plastic Rap

Note: Bill Cole is a registered professional engineer who has worked in the field of safety engineering for over 15 years. In recent years he has been professionally involved in the design and production of materials for archival storage of comics and other collectibles.

BY Bill Cole, P.E.

•Item: In the premiere issue of *Baseball Cards* magazine Bob Lemke published an article warning that poly-vinal chloride (PVC) holders could damage baseball cards. (and comics) The response was immediate. Some collectors swore off plastic album pages for good; others complained that they had never seen a card or comic damaged in any way despite prolonged storage in plastic.

• Item: The August, 1977 issue of *Modern Photography* contained a column attacking the use of PVC products for storage of photographs. Subsequently a major manufacturer of vinyl products claimed that the evidence against PVC was inconclusive, and demanded (but did not get) a retraction from the magazine. The manufacturer offered his own laboratory test report which showed no damage to photo slides by PVC holders. As recently as last year, however, Eastman Kodak issued a strongly worded advisory against the use of PCV.

• Item: Dr. Thomas Sharpless, a chemist and coin collector writing in the official journal of the American Numismatic Association, analyzed the damage inflicted by PVC holders on coins. His report precipitated a blizzard of mail to numismatic magazines around the country, with some collectors reporting major losses in coins and paper currency. But comic collectors who knew of these reports questioned their relevance. Many couldn't understand what bills and coins had to do with comics.

What's going on here? Are vinyl bags safe to use, or aren't they? And whose word can you trust?

Based on our exhaustive research into the problem, we think we've found some answers. We've spoken with plastics engineers, with manufacturers of resins and raw materials, with people who make vinyl film and people who distribute it. We've interviewed collectors, chemists and conservators -- including members of the preservation staff of the Library of Congress and other experts in the field of paper conservation.

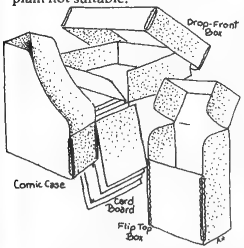
The answer we've come up with is, yes, all PVC sheet protectors will eventually damage comics -- but the key word here is "eventually." Some flexible vinyls will degrade rapidly, while others may last for years. Unfortunately there is no way of telling which are which, or how long it will take for any damage to show up, without running extensive physical and chemical tests on each plastic bag in advance.

Lemke likened the situation to sitting on a beach after the Weather Service has broadcast tidal wave warnings. In reality the situation is more like waiting for the next Great California Earthquake -- you know for sure it's going to happen some day, but you don't know *which* day (or which year, or which decade) until the roof finally starts caving in.

Let's get one thing strait: There is no need for panic, and no excuse for sensationalism. Our object in communicating this information is not to put any mer-

chandisers out of business, or to strike terror into the hearts of the buying public. We *are* committed to telling what we believe to be the truth, in the best interests of the collectors everywhere...and let the chips fall where they may.

The fact is, there will always be a market for vinyl bags for short-term storage. Dealers will continue to use them for display in stores and at shows. Collectors will still use them to house their least valuable books...and let us not forget how many comics exist that are worth less than, say, 50 cents each. But for any comic of value, and for any comic which you want to make sure survives intact into the 21st Century, PVC plastic is just plain not suitable.



To see why this is so, let's go over once more the way that vinyl film is made. PVC starts out as a hard, rigid material which requires the addition of one or more plasticizers to make it flexible; some films consist of up to one-third plasticizers. These plasticizers are oily substances, technically classified as esters, of which dioctyllphthalte (DOP) is typical. DOP is used as a primary plasticizer in virtually every scrap of PVC sheet made in this country, although it is often found in combination with smaller amounts of other plasticizers.

Now it is DOP and its oily cousins which cause most of the trouble by oozing or "migrating" out of the plastic and into whatever the sheet is protecting. The extent of migration and the rate at which it proceeds are determined by a variety of factors, including the kind of plasticizer used, its percentage in the PVC mix, and the conditions (such as humidity, temperature and pressure) under which the vinyl sheet is stored.

The plasticizer, which is dissolved in the PVC, is in a state of "dynamic equilibrium" with its environment -- a little bit is always going into or out of solution. As a result there is always some plasticizer present on the surface of the film, and contact pressure or higher temperatures will transfer more out. This is why manufacturers add what are known as "blocking agents," which prevent adjacent sheets of PVC from sticking to each other.

In addition to such esters as DOP, vinyl producers also throw in a number or different additives as both primary and secondary plasticizers. Two commonly-used additives are polyesters, such as polypropylene adipate, and epoxidized oils,

Containers that hold solution that extends the life of paper by reventing the acid attack which causes over 90% of paper deterioration

such as epoxidized soybean, linseed and castor oils. Each of these has a different purpose.

The polyesters are very thick oily liquids, each molecule of which weighs about five times as much as a molecule of DOP; consequently they tend to stay put in PVC rather than migrate out. A manufacturer who wants to make a "high quality" PVC film will replace up to half of the DOP with a polyester or similar polymeric plasticizer. Unfortunately no more than about half of the DOP can be replaced in this fashion, or the film will be too rigid -- and that still leaves a fair amount of DOP which can leak out, although at a slower rate.

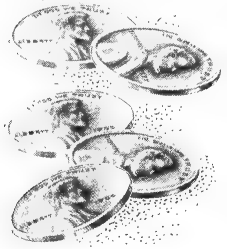
The epoxidized oils work as secondary plasticizers and stabilizers (about which more later). They are present in PVC in small percentages -- usually. In 1979, however, a minor crisis hit the plastics industry when supply problems caused a 20% drop in DOP production for the year. As a result, many vinyl processors switched to other plasticizers. Some suppliers -- including Union Carbide -- began pushing epoxidized soybean oil as a replacement for DOP. On the other hand, the Ferro Corporation took the position that excessive migration would result if epoxidized oils were used as a

primary plasticizer. Ferro recomended that the oil continue to be used only as an extender, i.e., as a secondary plasticizer.

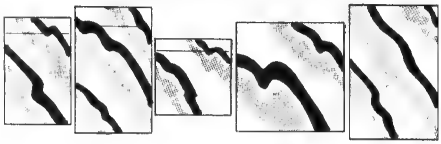
Let's stop for a moment and consider what all this means. First off all, there is no such thing as a flexible PVC comic bag without plasticizer. Almost all of this plasticizer is of the migratory variety and sooner or later, some is going to leak out, even from the highest-quality sheets. "How much?" and "How fast?" are questions that nobody can answer, unless you want to run some pretty expensive accelerated aging tests on samples of every bag you buy.

Second, there's a lot of variation in what goes into the PVC blend. Vinyl films are a zoo to different chemicals, some of which we haven't even mentioned yet. A distributor may not know exactly what a manufacturer has put into the plastic...and some manufacturers won't tell you anyway, because they might be disclosing proprietary information.

Furthermore, the content of any given run of film may be largely determined by the momentary fluctuations in the additives market, as the example of the epoxidised soybean oil shows. Of course, you can always hire a chemist to run



PLASTIC BAGS



tests such as gas chromatography and infrared spectroscopy on your album pages...or you could sit around and wait for your comics to soak up some visible evidence.

Which brings us to an interesting question: what effects will a leaking plasticizer have on a comic book, and can the stuff be removed once it's on? We asked William Sarill of Boston Mass., a conservator who is one of the world's leading experts on the restoration and preservation of comics, cards, and other paper collectibles. Here's his reply:

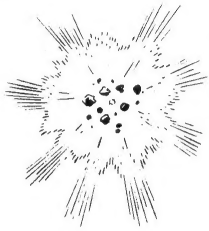
"Dioctyl Phthalate and similar esters are pretty stable under normal conditions, so I wouldn't expect them to contribute much to the aging of the card...The big problem is going to be back-migration of the lithographic inks from the card to the plastic, assuming the card picks up enough plasicizers for this to start. If we catch a card in time, we can wash out residual plasticizers with hydrocarbon solvents, such as hexanes, that won't cause any additional damage to the inks."

Sarill, incidentally, does NOT recommend that anyone try this procedure outside of a laboratory, since the solvents involved are highly flammable and some have been shown to cause neurological damage as well. (That's damage to PEOPLE, not to cards.)

Now that we've beaten the subject of plasticizers to death, the next issue we face is the need for thermal stabilizers. PVC degrades chemically when exposed to heat and hydrochloric acid given off. This acid acts as a catalyst to further degradation, so that a chain reaction starts. At the temperatures that PVC sheets are processed and sealed, this reaction is so rapid that the PVC would decompose into a gummy black mass if it weren't for the added stabilizers.

The stabilizers used in flexible vinyls are essentially barium, cadmium and zinc soaps which suck up excess acid like Rolaids. (The epoxidized oils we mentioned earlier act to improve the performance of these stabilizers.) Once a PVC sheet has exhausted its supply of stabilizer, it will rapidly decompose and start yellowing. More important, it will also release hydrochloric acid, which is definitely bad news for your comics.

A well-made vinyl bag which is properly stabilized might last



for years if it is kept away from heat and from ultraviolet light. Again, however, there is no way to tell in advance a "good" piece of PVC plastic from one that isn't without laboratory testing.

In addition, there are questions about the soaps themselves. As far as is known, these chemicals are not particularly harmful to comics, but the work of Dr. Thomas Sharpless on PVC coin holders suggests that the soaps don't entirely stay put in the PVC -- it's likely that they get transported around to some extent with the migrating plasticizers. If this occurs on a large enough scale, a comic could soak up enough stabilizers to cause the PVC to self-destruct, even at room temperature, in a relatively short time.

I could go on with descriptions of other additives in PVC, such as ultraviolet inhibitors and antioxidants, but by now you should be getting the idea that PVC is not necessarily the best material in which to risk storing your most treasured possessions. If you have stored your comics in plastic bags for years with no apparent harm, you may be in for some unpleasant surprises during the next few years if your "good" vinyl suddenly expires.

All right, if vinyl isn't suitable, what is? Cellulose acetate isn't -- it too may contain plasiticizers, not to mention acetic acid, and it tends to be too sensitive to changes in humidity. Polyethlene and polypropylene aren't much better; they contain a variety of substances, such as antioxidants, which have recencently been shown to be harmful to comics.

The answer -- and in fact the only answer -- is polyethylene terephthalate (PET), or polyester film for short. PET is a long-lasting virtually indestructible plastic, of which several brands are recommended by the Library of Congress for the protection of valuable documents. According to the Library, the Polyester film used MUST be free of all plasticizers, ultraviolet inhibitors, impregnants and surface coatings. PET types which meet these specifications include DuPont's Mylar D and ICI's Melinex 0 and 516. These crystal-clear films are among the most stable and inert of all known plastics.

The problem with using PET -- aside of its expense, which is considerably greater than that of PVC -- is that until recently the uncoated film could not be heat-sealed. the only method known for sealing polyester without

adhesives was to use ultrasonics, a cumbersome procedure at best. Recently, however, some exciting new advances in plastics technology have made it possible to heat-seal virgin polyester by a process known as biaxial reorientation. The result is a seal as strong as the plastic itself.

Since the new technology is now in the hands of a number of producers, we confidently predict that it will not be long before heat-sealed polyester sleeves for comic protection are available on the market.

To sum up, then, we feel that PVC protectors are inappropriate for long-term storage of valuable comics. Instead we recommend sleeves made from high-purity polyester film. To the collectors who protest that they've stored their comics in bags for years without damage, all we can say is that the older the bag is, the closer it's getting to the end of it's usable life.

In the words of Dr. Sharpless, these PVC bags are little time bombs waiting to go off. The decision to defuse them is entirely up to you.

The author welcomes questions and comments on this article. They may be addressed to Bill Cole, P.O. Box 60, Wollaston, MA 02170.

"SMALL FRY"
...HE'S MERELY KNEE-HIGH!
-AH'M EIGHTEEN YARS OLD.!!!/- TODAY AH IS A MAN!!/-KISS ME TALLULAH!/-AH IS ABOUT TO OFFER MAH SERVICES T' TH' YEW-NITED STATES ARMED FORCES!!!/
AH'LL KISS YO' AFTER THEY ACCEPTS YO' SERVICES, SMALL FRY!!
YO' WILL!!
-S-SHE PROMISED SHE'D KISS ME AFTER THEY ACCEPTS MAH SERVICES!/- SHE NEVAH PROMISED T' KISS ME BEFO'!/
WHO SAID WAR WAS TERRIBLE!!
BUT YO' CAIN'T REFOOZE ME, SERGEANT!/- AH IS EV'RY INCH A FIGHTIN' MAN!!
AH GOTTA REFOOZE YO', SMALL FRY!/-THAR AIN'T ENOUGH INCHES!!
OUTA TH' WAY, SUB-STANDARD- AN LET A REAL MAN ENLIST!!
JOIN THE ARMY
TH' BOY SCOUT HEADQUARTERS ARE DOWN TH' STREET!!
SLAM!!
U.S. MARINE RECRUITING OFFICE
R-REFOOZED AGIN!!/- THAR'S ALL TH' NAVY— BUT THIS TIME AH WON'T TAKE ANY CHANCES!!/
GULP!!/-H-HOW DID AH KNOW THEY'D WANT TO TAKE MAH CLOTHES OFF!!!
NAVY RECRUITING OFFICE
SLAM!!
WE CAIN'T USE YO' IN THIS DEFENSE PLANT, SMALL FRY!/-TH' WORKERS IS LIABLE T' STUMBLE OVER YO' WHILE PASSIN' TO AN' FRO!!/-
SLOPPERS ONLY
SMITTED?
SOB... REFOOZED AGIN!!
AH'LL NEVAH COLLECT THET KISS, TALLULAH!/- THEY HAS ALL REFOOZED MAH SERVICES, THARS NO WAY AH KIN FIGHT FO' MAH COUNTRY!!/
THAR IS A WAY, SMALL FRY!/- MILLIONS O' LIKKIER BOYS THAN YO' IS-IS A-TRAININ' T' DEFEND THIS COUNTRY!/- AN' AT HOME, OUR FACTRIES IS A-TURNIN OUT TH' TOOLS O' WAR!/- SHIPS AN' PLANES- TANKS AN' GUNS!!/
ALL THET NEEDS MONEY!/- TAKES ALONE CAINT DO IT!/- AN-THET'S TH' WAY YO' KIN FIGHT FO' YO' COUNTRY!/ -BY BUYIN' YEW-NITED STATES WAR BONDS!!/
EVRY TIME YO' BUYS A BOND -YO' HELPS WIN A BATTLE AS MUCH AS IF YO' FIT IN IT!/-AS A ADDED ATTRACKSHUN-AH WILL GIVE YO' A BIG JUICY KISS FO' EACH ONE YO' BUYS!/- THE COST'S AS LIL AS $18.75, AN IN 10 YARS, YO' GITS $25.00 BACK!!!
$18.75! -GULP!/- EF THAR IS THET MUCH MONEY IN TH' WORLD- AH'LL EARN IT SOMEHOW!!
IF YOU CAN'T BUY BONDS— BUY STAMPS!!

Master Comics #34 (Dec. 30, 1942)

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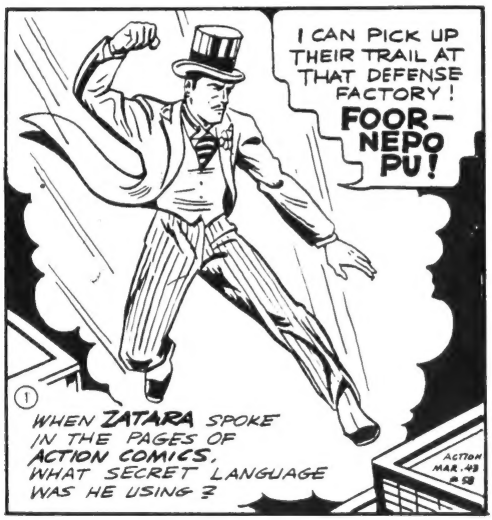
GOLDEN AGE PICTO-QUIZ #1

BY SAM CONNERY



① WHEN **ZATARA** SPOKE IN THE PAGES OF **ACTION COMICS**, WHAT SECRET LANGUAGE WAS HE USING?

NOVEMBER 1939-- --THE PREMIERE OF THE **HUMAN TORCH** REVEALS THAT IT TAKES ② TO MAKE THE **TORCH** BURST INTO FLAME, AND ONLY ③ CAN PUT IT OUT!

SHAPELY **BRENDA BANKS**, DRESSED ALL IN GREEN AS ④, USED JUDO TO QUELL VILLAINS IN **SMASH** COMICS

GREASEMONKEY GRIFFIN ENLIVENED ⑤ COMICS WITH HIS NUMBSKULL TRICKS

REMEMBER THIS SIGNATURE? **Alfred ANDRIOLA**

YEARS BEFORE **KERRY DRAKE**, HE DREW THAT SAGACIOUS ORIENTAL, ⑦

FROM A SUNDAY STRIP- NOV. 23, 1936

⑥ NAME 5 OF THE KATZENJAMMER FOLKS

RESPLENDENT IN RED, WHITE AND BLUE, ⑧ PILOTED HIS FLYING WING IN **BIG SHOT** COMICS

FROM "BIG SHOT" JAN. 1942

FROM "ALL-AMERICAN COMICS" DEC. 47

⑨ WHO WAS THE ORIGINAL **GREEN LANTERN'S** EVER-PRESENT PAL FROM BROOKLYN?

Answers here!

1. ENGLISH — SPELLED BACKWARDS
2. OXYGEN — 3. NITROGEN
4. LADY LUCK 5. WINGS COMICS
6. HANS, FRITZ, ROLLO, LENA, MAMA, INSPECTOR, CAPTAIN, MISS TWIDDLE 7. CHARLIE CHAN 8. SKYMAN 9. DOIBY